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## FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 8



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# Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026

146th year, 28th Issue — \$1

## Chamber honors top educators, business leaders

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce held its annual banquet on Saturday, February 7, celebrating excellence in education and business while recognizing the individuals who shape the community's future.

As part of the event, Bradford School Superintendent Will Hartley recognized the district's teachers of the year and school-related employees of the year.

"In 25 years of school grades, Bradford County has never been higher than a C district until last year," the superintendent said, crediting the achievement to the district's dedicated staff members.

School-related employees of the year included District School-Related Employee of the Year, Starke Elementary's Dawn Cullingford, Christine Collins of the district office, Lawtey Elementary's Sandra Acree, Bradford High School's Stacy Dyal, Bradford Elementary's Cheryl Chalker, North Florida Technical College's Aleta Durant and Heath Vann from transportation and maintenance.

Teachers of the Year were District Teacher of the Year from Bradford Elementary, Bobbie Douglas;



Incoming Chamber Chair Justis Smith presents outgoing Chair Brad Smith with an award recognizing his service.

Starke Elementary's Jessica Archibald; Bradford Middle School's Phylcia Petteway; Bradford High School's Rebecca Wilhite; Lawtey Elementary's Billy Stroud and David Bukowski from North Florida Technical College.

The chamber also presented business awards to outstanding community members. Leisa Sims of It's Your Day Bridal and Formal Boutique received the Business of the Year award. Sims has served the community for 14 years and actively participates in numerous local organizations and events, including serving on the education foundation board.

"She makes for the most beautiful and special days for a lot of people, be it their wedding or a pageant, or first birthdays, bridal showers," said Chamber President Pam Whittle. The president also thanked Sims's event management team for working the chamber banquet.

Seth Bell, part-owner and general manager of Titan Chevrolet, was honored with the J.E. Tomlinson Businessperson of the Year award. Whittle said Bell has become an integral part of the community since arriving, participating in local events, including

See CHAMBER, page 7

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**WORTH NOTING**

## Lawtey Resource Hub open

Bradford Community Partners quarterly Community Health and Wellness Hub in Lawtey will be open at Tatum Bros. Park from 10 a.m. to noon on Thursday, Feb. 12. Information about services and resources available to all. No appointments are necessary.

## Appreciation service for Reeves

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church in Raiford will have an appreciation service for Deacon Arthur Reeves on Sunday, Feb. 15, at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

## Medicinal herbs you may find around your house

By popular demand, the topic for the Feb. 19 meeting of the Alligator Creek Garden Club will be medicinal herbs. You may be surprised by the variety of common plants and kitchen spices that have medicinal value when used properly. For example, do you know anyone who takes cinnamon to help control their diabetes? And did you know some drink pine needle tea as protection from viral infections, including COVID?

Join in at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, to learn more. Master Gardener Pat Caren, who drinks pine needle tea daily, will teach you what she knows. The meeting will be held at the Bradford Senior Center, located at 1805 N. Temple Ave. (U.S. 301 in front of the health department). Refreshments, including pine needle tea, will be served. If you have any questions, call Caren at 352-339-3673.

## Fairgrounds food distribution

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 9 a.m. at the Bradford County Fairgrounds.

Food boxes often include fresh produce, deli and bakery items, dairy and some meats. Inventory is subject to availability. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Providence man aired grievances on TikTok before killing

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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The man who killed two women near Providence on Tuesday, February 3, and then took his own life, posted a pair of videos on TikTok in which he described the collapse of his 13-year relationship with one of the victims.

The Union County Sheriff's Office said that around 4:30 p.m., it received reports of shots being fired near County Road 241.

Deputies found two deceased females on the scene, identified as Candice P. Joseph, 43, of Lake Butler, and Marisa Salome Jimenez, 42, of San Antonio, Texas. Witnesses said the shooter, identified as 47-year-old Jason Eric Holton of Lake Butler, left in a 2020 black Ford F-150.

"A statewide notice went out at the time the suspect fled the scene before our arrival," the sheriff's office said in a news release. "(The) suspect was located traveling southbound on I-75 by Alachua County Sheriff's Office and Florida Highway Patrol units... Law enforcement conducted a PIT maneuver to stop the vehicle and suspect in an effort to apprehend the suspect. (A) SWAT Team was activated and (the suspect) was discovered deceased with a self-inflicted gunshot wound."



In the two-part video, recorded around 13 hours before the Providence shootings, Holton addressed followers of a TikTok account associated with his former partner, Candice P. Joseph.



Candice P. Joseph, a TikTok influencer with over 675,000 followers, used the platform to discuss the personality traits of people born under various zodiac signs and to promote clothing and jewelry.



Marisa Salome Jimenez also used TikTok to document her trip to Florida.

In the two-part video, recorded around 13 hours before the Providence shootings, Holton addressed followers of a TikTok account associated with his former partner, Joseph. He said the couple had been together since 2013.

Joseph, a TikTok influencer with over 675,000 followers, used the platform to discuss the personality traits of people born under various zodiac signs and to promote clothing and jewelry.

Holton described discovering on January 19 that his partner had begun an online relationship with someone she met on TikTok. He said this was the second time she had engaged in such behavior, with the first occurring at the end of 2020 through TikTok and Snapchat. He said the couple had reconciled after that earlier incident and had several good years together.

After the January 2026 discovery, Holton said the emotional toll became overwhelming. He disclosed that on January 20 or 21, he attempted suicide and was subsequently hospitalized for nine days in a medical facility and a mental health facility. He said Joseph did not visit him during his hospitalization.

See SHOOTING, page 7

## Burn bans in effect



Multiple brushfires have highlighted the need for ongoing burn bans. Because of the dry conditions and the potential for wildfires, outdoor burns are prohibited during a burn ban. This includes all outdoor burning: yard trash, barrels, bonfires, fire pits, etc. Those who see illegal burns taking place are encouraged to report them. Photo: Bradford County Fire Rescue protects property from brush fire.

## Riddick will not run for reelection

His and other seats open to candidates

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

County Commissioner Danny Riddick has announced he will not seek reelection this year.

He was emotional when making the announcement last week, saying it was a tough decision because he enjoys the job.

"I'll just tell you, God has blessed me. He's helped me find favor with the people. He's kept me in office for a long time. I enjoy it, but I've got eight grandkids that I love more than anything in the world, and so with that — out of respect for this job — I just want it out there I will not be seeking reelection. So just please be praying that God will put the next one he wants in line," he said.

Riddick won the seat in 2010 and has held it since then, surpassing his father Joe's 12 years of service on the board.

### Open seats and salaries

Riddick represents the county's fourth district, which includes the Hampton area, Theresa and the south. District 2, represented by Kenny Thompson on the county commission and Gayle Nicula on the school board, is also up for election this year. That district is northwestern Bradford, including part of Lawtey.

See VOTE, page 3



### Junior Garden Club Day

Junior Garden Club Day will be hosted by Bryan's Ace Hardware Store and Garden

Center in collaboration with the Garden Club of the Lakes, offering fun and educational gardening activities for children in the community.

The event is Saturday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The store is

located at 251 E. Lawrence Dr. in Keystone Heights. Children will have the opportunity to engage in various exciting activity stations, including ice cream cone planters, radish necklaces, pinecone bird feeders and the

worm station, among others.

Bryan's will supply all necessary pots, seeds and flowers, along with cookies and punch for the young gardeners. Garden Club members will be available to teach children the joys of

gardening and provide hands-on experience. Additionally, a bake sale featuring delicious muffins, brownies and cakes will take place. Proceeds from the bake sale will benefit local high school seniors pursuing college or

vocational education and support other community projects.

This event is free for children of all ages. Families are encouraged to bring children and grandchildren to enjoy a day filled with fun and learning.

**Saturday, Feb 14th, 2026**

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**8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m**

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 OR email [newriverbaptistbrooker@gmail.com](mailto:newriverbaptistbrooker@gmail.com)

### KIDS OUTDOOR ZONE

#### BOYS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE MINISTRY

KOZ is a boy's outdoor adventure ministry based in the church. One Saturday a month the boys meet with trained KOZ leaders from the church. All boys 8-18 with or without a father are welcome!

There may also be some outings, adventures, campouts during the year the KOZ boys are invited too.

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# VOTE

Continued from page 1

The school board also has elections for the first and fifth districts. Those seats are held by Sheila Cummings and Lynn Melvin. District 1 begins in northeast Bradford with part of Lawtey and wraps around of Starke, including portions in the north and south of the city. District 5 stretches across the map, including Brooker, Sampson City and voters south of Starke.

These are compensated positions, with the starting salaries calculated by the state for each county. For a county commissioner in Bradford in 2026, the salary is \$41,309. For a school board member, the salary is \$35,050.

Starke also has three

commission seats open for election — districts one, three and five. These are the seats currently held by Danny Nugent, Bob Milner and Andy Redding. The starting salary per ordinance is \$1,481 a month, or \$17,772 a year.

As nonpartisan races, the city and school board elections will take place on the date of the primary for the partisan elections — Tuesday, Aug. 18. Winners from the partisan races with opposition from another party will move on to November, appearing on the ballot alongside state and federal races, including governor.

## Interested in running?

Anyone interested in running for local office should call 904-966-6266 and make an

appointment with Supervisor of Elections Amanda Seyfang who has handbooks ready to go and all the information you will need. Seyfang's updated website — [www.votebradfordfl.gov](http://www.votebradfordfl.gov) — is also full of information for voters and candidates alike. The modern design offers easy navigation and improved access. Voters can quickly find details about registration, voting by mail, early voting (still to be determined), polling places, upcoming elections and other essential resources.

Seyfang encourages all voters to make sure their information, including addresses and personal identification number required for registration (driver's license or Social Security number) are up to date. The elections office is receiving new, updated equipment with improved security, but with no changes to the user interface familiar

to voters. Elections personnel are never too busy to answer questions about your right to vote.

To vote in the Aug. 18 primary election, voters must be registered by July 20. To vote in the Nov. 3 general election, voters must be registered by Oct. 5.

## Announce your candidacy

The Bradford County Telegraph, Union County Times and Lake Region Monitor offer candidates an opportunity to publish an announcement of their intention to seek public office. This offer is limited, with submissions accepted no later than the Monday following qualifying week, which takes place in April for federal and judicial candidates, and June for

state and local candidates.

There is a one-time charge of \$50 to run the announcement with a photo of the candidate (headshot). This must be paid out of your campaign account. All other submissions will be charged current rates.

Submissions should be emailed to [editor@bctelegraph.com](mailto:editor@bctelegraph.com).

## LB VFW hosts bingo

Lake Butler VFW Post 10082 has bingo on Thursdays at 7 p.m. The VFW is located off C.R. 231 just outside of Lake Butler. Look for the sign on the left (coming from town).

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## Starke Fire Rescue pays it forward



Starke firefighters presented a \$1,000 check to Bradford Sports United to support the fledgling recreation program, which is preparing to launch its first season. Firefighters took the prize in a sandwich-making competition with the Bradford County Sheriff's Office sponsored by Wawa and gifted the money to support youth sports. Pictured are BSU board members Danny Riddick, Josh Davis, Cathy Bradley, firefighter Greg Starling, Rec Director Deana DeSiena, firefighter Alan Hunsinger, and BSU board members Joann Jackson and Clint Collins. Photo: City of Starke.

## Zoning director resigns, faces ethics charges

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Randy Andrews, who served as director of Bradford County's zoning office, is no longer at work amid possible ethics charges.

According to a press release following the Florida Commission on Ethics most recent meeting, the ethics commission found probable cause that Andrews "violated the constitutional amendment prohibiting abuse of office for a disproportionate benefit and misused his position when he used his county-issued email to correspond with prospective

buyers of a property he owned."

Bradford County commissioners accepted Andrews' resignation last week via the consent agenda after two commissioners failed to have the item removed for further discussion.

Commissioner Danny Riddick said he had wanted to discuss the future direction of the office. County Manager Scott Kornegay said had not decided whether to fill the position or go in another direction. The county has consultants with continuing contracts experienced in land use matters. That includes current work preparing the Evaluation

and Appraisal Report due on the county's comprehensive plan and preparing amendments to the land development regulations.

With the finding of probable cause, the complaint became public and a hearing, similar to a trial, will be held before an administrative law judge unless the ethics commission advocate and Andrews reach a stipulated agreement.

One or the other — the judge's findings or the agreement — will be sent to the ethics commission for final action, including recommended penalties.

## ICE discussion spills over to city commission meeting

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
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According to Starke Mayor Andy Redding, discussions between consultants and the county about hosting an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility have not included the city commission.

As citizen Paul Still pointed out during his comments to the city commission Feb. 3, the proposal calls for the extension of Starke's water and wastewater lines to the Douglas Building property on U.S. 301 South. According to Still, the usage by the detention center would equal that of 1,000 new homes. While the city would reap the revenue of that usage, it would be losing the tax revenue associated with 1,000 homes.

"I think this is a really a bad deal for the city," he said.

Valara Petteway praised the city's responsiveness to emergencies including utility outages, but she asked commissioners to think how that could change if resources were stretched to serve such a large facility.

"Think about what you're doing. Think about our capacity to be supportive of our citizens, to be there when they need you, to be there when that emergency happens," she said.

Milton Baker said he hasn't

heard anything positive about ICE wherever they go.

"Do we really want that here in Starke?" he asked, mentioning face masks, mistakes and killings. "Think about that whenever that time comes when y'all — because y'all will be faced with it. So please take that in consideration that it don't come with nothing nice. It comes with something that can really create problems for all of us."

"Please don't think I'm trying to be racist," Baker continued, "but it can happen to any of us. They can make a mistake. They have done it on TV."

Melissa Protomastro repeated concerns shared with county commissioners about Starke's reputation, contrasting razor wire fencing surrounding a detention center with the billboards welcoming visitors to Starke. She said the 3,000 detainees would be consuming utility capacity and the 1,200 employees would be living in RVs because there is no housing.

Starke would be a critical component to the proposal, but so far, the mayor said any discussions had not included the city commission.

"I know that things are in exploratory stages and doing homework and things like that. But just for the record, we do not currently have anything on our desk," Redding said.

## Sierra Club raises questions

The Suwannee St. Johns Group of the Sierra Club has raised questions about the ICE proposal, asking how does a facility of this scale fit into the county's long-term planning for growth, infrastructure and public services.

In a release, the group claimed, "A 3,000-bed detention center functions much like a small town. Yet unlike a town, the detained population does not generate housing demand, support local businesses or participate in civic life. Still, the facility would place constant, around-the-clock demand on infrastructure — water, wastewater, roads and emergency services. This creates population-scale intensity without community-scale benefit, a mismatch that local planning policies are meant to prevent."

The Suwannee St. Johns Group of the Sierra Club said plans for the detention center are also out of step with the county's economic goals.

"The town has long welcomed new businesses that strengthen the local economy while preserving its rural character. A massive internment facility does

See ICE, page 5

## Contamination raises more concerns about proposed ICE facility

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Florida Department of Environmental Protection is updating landowners about the contamination identified in the groundwater beneath the former Department of Management Services Bureau of Federal Property Assistance warehouse on U.S. 301 south of Starke.

FDEP covered the cost of extending Starke's waterlines to the Deerwood subdivision

in 2003 after some wells tested positive for contamination of volatile chemicals. Affected property owners were notified again about the extent of the contamination as a Temporary Point of Compliance was established in 2012. Monitoring of the TPOC has continued since remediation.

Pending funding availability, future remediation may be undertaken. Until then, property owners are being told that their health and the environment are

adequately protected.

The contamination includes volatile organic compounds, including trichloroethene (also known as trichloroethylene), classified as a carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. There can also be health effects on the nervous and immune systems as well as liver and kidneys. The type and length of exposure are determining factors. The source is believed to be solvents used at the warehouse, such as degreasers or paint strippers.

The compound is volatile, meaning it evaporates into the air at room temperature. Deerwood resident Michelle Green questioned FDEP about vapor intrusion in and around the site, particularly since a proposed use for the warehouse and surrounding property is an immigrant detention facility for Immigration Customs and Enforcement.

According to FDEP's responses, a 2018, the Florida Department of Health completed a health consultation that

See FDEP, page 5



### HOW HUNGRY ARE YOU? Part 4

Last week we opened with Psalms 42:1-2, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." We discussed to remain spiritually healthy one must feed on spiritual food. Healthy people have a healthy appetite. People who are spiritually healthy hunger for God. They have an appetite for the Word of God, for prayer, for communion with their Lord. Even as people lose their appetite and it effects their physical body in various ways. Christians who are weak and sickly have lost their appetite for God. The fire they had at one time is no longer burning in their souls. It is the same with Churches. A church can lose the fire of God. People of an assembly can grow cold and find themselves going around in the same spiritual circle for years. This is where burnout begins to occur in the pastors and the leadership. It then trickles throughout the congregation. The finances may be fine, the numbers of the congregants attending seem to be steady, maybe see a few people added along and along. But what is the spiritual temperature, is there a fire burning in the leadership and in the people? Is there a real God hunger in our souls for more of God? Is there a heart cry for the lost and dying? Are we moved with compassion for the sick and hurting? What about the poor and the hungry? If the answer to any or all of those questions is No! It all began with hunger, or our lack of hunger for more of Jesus. It is here I would like to share with you a true story. In the early 1700's a man named Count Zinzendorf opened his estate to a group of Christians called the Hussites. This was the beginning of the Moravian Community. It included a group of approximately 300 people. In the beginning everything seemed fine in the community but soon things begin to unravel. People of the community began to persecute and backbite one another, and began to complain about all sorts of things.

During the process of time they had turned inward. They were no longer hungry for God, they were not doing what they were supposed to be doing... reaching others for Christ. We as born again Christians are supposed to grow in our relationship with the Lord and seek after the lost. We are to be about our Father's business in ministering His love and life to humanity. So, in desperation, Count Zinzendorf called a prayer meeting. The community was celebrating the Lord's Supper around midnight and they were praying and seeking God. It was during this time of seeking that suddenly the Holy Spirit fell on this community of around 300 people. When the Holy Spirit fell many of the people were knocked to the ground and began to shake under the power of God. What happened to this small community is astounding. Over the next 25 years that small community sent out 100 missionaries. Church history confirms that in 25 years the Moravians would accomplish more than the entire protestant world had done in the previous 200 years. What made the difference? They recognized their lack, became hungry for more and began to seek the face of God. As a result, the Holy Spirit came upon them afresh and anew. What would the church look like if you and I became desperately hungry for more of God? We as Christians need to take time and examine ourselves. Pastors and leaders of the church need to search their hearts and examine themselves. Do we have the fire of God burning in our souls? Are we satisfied with the hunger in our own hearts? How spiritually healthy is our congregation, not on the surface, but what amount of peace and joy are the people walking in? Are we carrying the presence and glory of our Master inside and outside the four walls of the church. Would to God that we all would hunger and thirst for more of God. Blessings! -Pastor Rick

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### Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



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## HCA celebrates 25th anniversary Homecoming

Hope Christian Academy staff, students and families celebrated Homecoming Feb. 2-6, culminating with the crowning of a new king and queen, presenting of class-earned Spirit Sticks, and a big 65-29 varsity boys' basketball win.

Throughout the week, students competed in skits, games, dress-up theme days, banner designs and more in an effort to win one of three Spirit Sticks at the end of the week. Coming out on top showcasing the most spirit: Katie King's K5 class (elementary), Latoya Foster's middle school class, and the junior class sponsors Malena Hanson and

Tiffany Snyder. Weeklong events and skits were based on retro video game themes.

ROAR was kicked off with prayer and opened by the HCA Praise Team. Staff also got involved, playing a Seniors vs-Staff volleyball game, competing in an inflatable animal race and taking part in a Pie-in-the-Face fundraiser. Students enjoyed inflatables, face painting and class snack booths.

Guests at ROAR were able to view 25 years of HCA at a Travel Back in Time display presented by the HCA Public Relations Department.



Seniors Addyson Wilson and Landon Perry were voted Hope Christian's Homecoming Queen and King during ROAR. Photo: Virginia Denmark.



HCA varsity boys won their homecoming game 65-29 against Gainesville Christian Community. Pictured: junior Caden Hartzog. Photo: Chris Amis.



Class representatives (l-r) seventh graders Abbygail Adkins and Dawson McNeese, eighth graders Grace Amis and Liam Fisher, freshman Leah Boulet and Colton Davis, sophomores Chloe Hostetler and Joelle Smith, and juniors Lilli Drew and Alex Becker.



Hope Christian Academy's campus organizations were represented at Homecoming during the annual ROAR event. Pictured (l-r) are 4-H's Aubri Bradshaw and Keagen Leukel; National Honor Society's Walker Munroe and Bre Odom; Key Club's Natalie Lowe and Mason Faulkner; and Student Government Association's Lesly Salvidrez and Mathias Reyes. Photo: Virginia Denmark.

## Help domestic violence victims

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Recent shootings in Bradford and Union counties have underscored the crisis of domestic violence. The tragic incidents have raised awareness about the immediate need for support for victims and the roles that community members can play in offering assistance.

Domestic violence can encompass physical, mental/emotional and sexual abuse — pushing, kicking and beating as well as threats, intimidation, stalking and any unwanted sexual contact. Victims may be living with the perpetrator or they may be estranged. They may be related by blood, marriage or simply dating.

Domestic violence victims hesitate to seek help for a number of reasons like fear of retaliation, concern for their children, economic dependency, shame and stigma, emotional manipulation and more.

Understanding these barriers is crucial for the community to support victims and encourage them to seek help. Creating a safe, supportive environment can empower victims to take the necessary steps toward safety and healing.

The Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network serves this area and offers a variety of resources for victims of domestic violence, including:

—24-hour helpline: A confidential helpline (call 352-377-8255, text 352-727-0948) available 24/7 for crisis intervention, support and guidance.

—Emergency shelter: Safe accommodations for victims and their children, providing a secure environment for up to six weeks.

—Crisis counseling: Individual and group counseling services to help victims process their experiences and develop coping strategies.

—Safety planning: Assistance in creating personalized safety

plans to help victims protect themselves and their children from potential threats.

—Legal advocacy: Support in navigating the legal system, including help with filing restraining orders and understanding victims' rights.

—Support groups: Facilitated group sessions for survivors to share experiences and gain support from others facing similar challenges.

—Children's programs: Specialized services for children affected by domestic violence, including counseling and therapeutic activities to help them heal.

—Economic empowerment programs: Resources and training to assist victims in gaining financial independence, including job skills training and employment resources.

—Community education: Workshops and outreach programs aimed at raising awareness about domestic violence and educating the community on how to help.

Peaceful Paths works collaboratively with local law enforcement and community organizations to ensure comprehensive support for victims and to promote prevention efforts within the community. Both the Bradford and Union county sheriff's offices have victim advocates that can help with legal and other support services. Contact Bradford at 904-966-6161 (www.bradfordshiff.org) and Union at 386-496-2501 (www.unionsheriff.us).

Find out more about Peaceful Paths at [www.peacefulpaths.org](http://www.peacefulpaths.org).



Senior Homecoming Court: Lacey Depoe, Savannah Jewell, Mackenzie McRaney, Queen Addyson Wilson, Brook Parrish, Lydia Jones and Lorlai Green. Photos: Virginia Denmark.



Senior Homecoming Court: Noah Gaffney, Mason Faulkner, Blayne Wilkinson, King Landon Perry, Joshua Wayne Dowling (escort), Adam White and Noah Leon (escort).

## ICE Continued from page 4

not fit that vision," the group stated. "Communities that anchor growth to detention centers often find themselves more vulnerable, not more stable — dependent on federal contracts that can change overnight and left with specialized infrastructure that is difficult to repurpose if operations shut down. ... Instead of attracting small businesses, families and long-term investment, a facility of this nature is more likely to draw protests, strain public resources and deter the kind of homegrown, mom-and-pop enterprises that actually sustain rural towns."

The Suwannee St. Johns Group of the Sierra Club represents a 14-county area that includes Bradford, Union and southwest Clay, and its volunteer members

believe in sharing and protecting natural resources. Member Joanne Tremblay shared many of these points with county commissioners on Feb. 3.

According to the group, "Expanding Bradford County's functional population by more than 10 percent through the addition of a detention center — no matter where it is proposed — is not a sustainable or meaningful way to support this community. Our town's future should be built on growth that strengthens families, small businesses, and civic life, not on facilities that isolate people and strain public resources. Immigrants have long been part of the success of the American experiment, contributing to our economy, culture and communities in ways that detention centers can never replicate."

## FDEP Continued from page 4

eliminated possible indoor air exposure in the main office building because shallow groundwater contamination was not detected. The health department did recommend maintenance bay doors remain open when workers were inside.

The 2018 report did indicate that areas with shallow groundwater contamination around the property could be vulnerable to vapor intrusion if the owner constructs new buildings over these areas.

Further development of the site could be coming. The warehouse is no longer in the state's hands. The facility and its acreage were conveyed to the county for economic development. That has not been successful, leading County Manager Scott Kornegay and Sheriff Gordon Smith to bring in Sabot Consulting to propose an ICE facility to the county commission.

Green is warning that the danger of vapor intrusion has not been evaluated for a detention facility that is housing people 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Until that happens, she questioned whether Bradford County should continue proposing this use for the site.

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## District facing unprecedented challenges

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County Schools Superintendent Mike Ripplinger is navigating a complex landscape of declining enrollment, unpredictable state funding, and increasing competition from school choice alternatives as the district works to retain students and maintain quality education.

In a recent interview, Ripplinger detailed the financial pressures facing the small rural district, which depends on the Florida Education Finance Program for approximately 85% of its funding, significantly more than larger districts that have additional property tax revenues. The funding uncertainty has created serious budgeting challenges. Last year, when the state released its third calculation in late February, Union County learned it would receive \$670,000 less than budgeted for the remainder of the year due to a loss of 73 Full-Time Equivalent students.

"You make your plans based on what they say, this is what you're going to have to run your business," Ripplinger said. "But then, as the year goes on, even after you've engaged in these fixed costs, then they come back and say, well, you're actually going to have less."

### 3 out of 4 students are still coming to us

Despite these challenges, approximately 80% of Union County students still attend traditional public schools rather than homeschool, private schools, or charter schools, a figure that mirrors the statewide trend, where three out of four Florida students remain in brick-and-mortar public schools.

"When you listen to the things coming out over the media through Tallahassee, it doesn't appear that way," Ripplinger noted. "It seems like maybe 70% are going to charter schools, private schools, or homeschooling. But three out of four students are still coming to us."

To attract and retain students, Ripplinger emphasizes what traditional public schools can uniquely offer: comprehensive student services, including mental health counseling, ESE services, healthcare, safety through school resource officers, career and technical education, college-preparatory coursework, and social opportunities through extracurriculars and athletics.

The district has also opened its extracurricular activities and sports programs to homeschool and private school students who pay a fee to participate. While not generating significant revenue, the initiative helps offset costs and has brought several students onto middle school athletic teams.



Superintendent Mike Ripplinger detailed the financial pressures facing the small rural district.

"Relationships are a big part of what we do," Ripplinger said, pointing to last month's Miss Union County High School pageant, where multiple contestants cited their teachers, including Lieutenant Colonel Stevenson of the JROTC program, agriculture teacher Tom Williams, and criminal justice instructor Travis Rimes, as hometown heroes.

The superintendent said the pageant displayed the outsized role quality teachers can play in a student's life.

"When a high school kid is going to get up there in front of the world and say, my hometown hero is my teacher," Ripplinger said, "you saw evidence of that."

### Elementary school construction progressing

The new Lake Butler Elementary School project continues to move forward, with groundbreaking targeted for August. The \$88.5 million facility is being funded entirely through the state's Special Facilities Program, with money allocated in three annual tranches of approximately \$29.5 million each.

Ripplinger said the timing of construction has been carefully coordinated with funding releases

See **SCHOOLS**, page 7

## KH council approves parking space removal, Lake Geneva funding

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Keystone Heights City Council voted Monday to remove one street parking space on South Lawrence Boulevard to improve traffic flow and safety at a congested intersection, while also approving more than \$41,000 to support the Lake Geneva restoration project.

The parking space removal, the northernmost spot in front of Keystone Gifts and Guns at 155 South Lawrence Boulevard, represents a compromise after months of negotiations between the city and the Florida Department of Transportation. The change is part of a larger project to add a right-turn lane from Lawrence Boulevard onto Walker Drive (State Road 100).

City Manager Jamie Booth told council members the solution balances competing concerns about parking availability and traffic congestion at the busy intersection.

"This gets back to only taking the first parking space, the northernmost parking space", Booth said. "It creates a nice, sloped entrance into the through lane."

Earlier FDOT proposals would have eliminated three to five parking spaces in the area, but city officials pushed back, citing the importance of downtown parking for local businesses. The final design incorporates striping and lane markings to better guide drivers through the intersection, where traffic frequently backs up as drivers navigate the sharp turn.

Property owner Karen Nelson, whose building fronts the affected parking area, said she appreciated the city's efforts to minimize the impact.

"I'm not opposed to taking one," Nelson said. "I like that idea, and I appreciate that DOT saw that eventually could make it work out."

Councilman Dan Lewandowski, who has championed parking preservation, acknowledged the compromise while planting seeds for future improvements. He suggested that the city explore reclaiming a curved

section of right-of-way after FDOT completes construction, potentially adding angled parking spaces.

"Every study says parking, parking, parking," Lewandowski said. "I'm still not happy about losing a parking space, but it is much better than what it was."

### Lake Geneva project moves forward

In other action, the council unanimously approved transferring \$41,241 from the city's lakes account to Clay County to support the Lake Geneva Restoration Project. Among other solutions, the funds will help remove fallen trees blocking the lake's connection at Nelson's Point.

Mayor Nina Rodenroth said the money had been earmarked for a fishing pier at Keystone Beach Park, but the tree-clearing project is a higher priority.

"With the pier now kind of on hold until we just get the trees out of the way, that's why this came up, and this needed some extra funds," she said.

Clay County Commissioner Betsy Condon thanked the council for its continued support during public comments.

"We believe we have a path to fund the entire proposed project," Condon said. "Hopefully I'll be able to convince my fellow commissioners next Tuesday evening (to contribute) and then in March, we're going to our tourist development council to ask them to transfer some funds from their budget into the general budget to fund this project because access to Lake Geneva is all about fishing, and we keep hearing all the time, please host fishing tournaments."

The multi-agency effort includes the St. Johns River Water Management District, Clay County, and the city. Officials hope to clear the debris before lake levels rise again, preventing further damage to city property at Keystone Beach and other access points.

The council appointed Carolyn Vanzo to the Planning

and Zoning Commission. Vanzo, a new resident who moved from Melbourne in September, works as an environmental scientist for the St. Johns River Water Management District.

"I've been with them about seven years in vegetation mapping, submerged aquatic vegetation monitoring, and springs monitoring, and I'm a mother of two," the applicant told council members. "They both go to Keystone Heights Elementary, grades four and five. I've been very interested in an opportunity like this and to learn and get experience in any way I can to help Keystone."

### City projects update

Booth provided an extensive update on city projects, including:

- The Keystone Heights Memorial Gardens administrative building is nearly complete, with only HVAC and internet installation remaining. A new QR code system allows visitors to get directions to specific grave sites.

- Tennis court construction at the city park, approved last August, will move forward after the city was unable to secure a U.S. Tennis Association grant.

- The pavilion's septic-to-sewer conversion, budgeted for \$20,000, came in under budget at approximately \$18,500.

- Beam and Beasley lanes received asphalt milling to improve road conditions.

### Calendar changes

The council rescheduled its May meeting from May 4 to May 11 to accommodate Councilman Dan Lewandowski's attendance at his son's college graduation in California. The coffee and commerce meeting scheduled for May 11 will move to May 4.

The next regular city council meeting is scheduled for March 2 at 6 p.m., preceded by a Community Redevelopment Agency meeting at 5:30 p.m.

  
**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY**  
 to my beautiful, loving wife *Shirley Sewell*,  
 to my amazing mom *Jessie Berry*,  
 and to my wonderful kids & grandkids!  
*Love you*  
 -Rick Sewell

  
**Shining Stars of the Week!**  
 Recognizing the following outstanding students for their amazing character and academic achievements!

 <b>Aaden Henderson</b> <b>K5</b> <b>Hope Christian Academy</b> <i>Aaden Henderson is always on top of his work and gives his best effort</i>	 <b>Aubree Reza</b> <b>1st Grade</b> <b>Bradford Elementary</b> <i>Aubree Reza is a delight to have class, she is always ready to lend a helping hand to classmate. Her work ethic is a joy to see!</i>
 <b>Apryl Thompkins</b> <b>3rd Grade</b> <b>Lawtey Elementary</b> <i>Apryl is a pleasure to have in class she's is so sweet and hard working and such a great friend!</i>	 <b>Jaycee Young</b> <b>7th Grade</b> <b>Light Christian Academy</b> <i>This is Jaycee's first year here at Light Christian Academy, and we already seeing her achieve great things in her schoolwork. She is a delight to have in the classroom, and she gets along well with everyone around her. She truly is thriving at L.C.A., and we are glad that she is a part of our school!</i>



## KH teachers and staff win awards

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

At the Thrasher-Horne Center in Clay County, teachers, family members, friends, and dedicated staff gathered to cheer, chant, and hold signs in support of their favorite Teacher and School-Related Employee of the Year for this year's Apple Awards.

The Apple Awards took place on Thursday, January 22.

Keystone Heights Elementary, McRae Elementary, and Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School staff members were all in attendance, each awarding their own Teachers and School-Related Employees of the Year, who were then nominated to compete for countywide recognition.

This Year, there were a total of 44 Teachers of the Year and 44 School-Related Employees of the Year.

Allison Sanders, a sixth-grade math teacher, received the Keystone Heights Elementary Teacher of the Year award.

"It was more of an honor to win it for my school than it is to win it on the county level, but for being in the classroom, in the Gen Ed setting, for only two years now, and teaching for I think my fourth year, I feel like it's a pretty big milestone to hit right out of the gate," said Sanders.

"Keep the kids first and everything else will fall in line, and always put others first," she added.

Shannon Bishop, the Principal Secretary and Bookkeeper at Keystone Heights Elementary, was named School-Related Employee of the Year.

"Being kind and working closely with the admin team, if we have happy employees, then we have a good team and a happy school," said Bishop.

At McRae Elementary, Amy Dawn Batchelor was named Teacher of the Year.

Tara Barrett, an ISS assistant, received the School-Related Employee of the Year award. She was recognized for going above and beyond by managing three positions while her teammate was on maternity leave.

"Don't think things go unseen. Everybody can see what you're doing and all of the hard work that everybody here at McRae puts in for these kids," said Tara Barrett.



**Amy Dawn Batchelor, McRae Elementary, Teacher of the Year, and Tara Barrett, McRae Elementary School Related Employee Year**



**Allison Sanders, KHES, Teacher of the Year, and Shannon Bishop KHES, School-Related Employee Year**



**April Goolsby, KHHS Teacher of the Year, and Haley Julius, KHHS School-Related Employee of the Year.**

She would love to be a teacher and has begun pursuing her elementary education degree.

Haley Julius, a PBS teacher's assistant, won the School-Related Employee of the Year award at Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School.

"I honestly just wanted to thank them because without the KHHS team, it would not have happened. We work together really well in our unit, and even the admin, teachers, and assistants work together to be able to see the hard work that we do every day," said Julius.

"Biggest thing is just to show up. The biggest thing for this team is showing up for the kids, showing up for the adults, and just being there every day with a smile on your face. No matter if there are going to be rough or hard days," she said.

She does plan on pursuing a teaching career.

April Goolsby, History, Civics, and Psychology, a teacher with 30 years of experience, won the Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School Teacher of the Year award.

"I'm very honored that my peer group would think highly of me, to choose me to represent them, because I feel like there are so many other teachers here that deserve it," said Goolsby.

"To teachers, newer teachers, hang in there. Give it some time. It does get easier. Don't give up," she said.

This is her second time receiving

the Teacher of the Year award.

"It's really fun to be able to celebrate the positive things happening in education, and those who do the hard work every day should be recognized for that every day," said Laurie Burke, Principal of Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School.

"Just keep showing up. We call it Indian strong here at Keystone Heights High School because, you know, sometimes the hardest part in our jobs is showing up. The kids bring you joy, and we know that they need us," said Burke.

This Year's Teacher of the Year for Clay County was Dorothy Bailey from Grove Park Elementary, who won a car from Gerber Auto Mall.

The School-Related Employee of the Year award for Clay County was presented to Mr. Jenner Pereda from Ridgeview High School.

# Crime

## Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

The following individuals were recently arrested by local law enforcement officers in Bradford, Union, or Clay (Keystone Heights area) counties. All defendants are considered innocent until convicted in a court or until pleading guilty or no contest. Information in this report is from law enforcement agencies and court documents, which are public records.

### Bradford

Joshua Randall Borders, 18, homeless, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 31 for resisting an officer and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

David Jim Browning, 59, homeless, was arrested by Lawtey police on February 4 for disorderly intoxication.

John Kyser Byrd, 39, of Lake City, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 1 for battery.

Lawanda Maria Copeland, 48, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 31 for battery.

Taryn Lee-Anne Crews, 34, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 1 for three counts of child neglect, arson and simple assault.

Andrae Bernard Dommon, 50, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 31 for possessing drug equipment and withholding support.

Jonathan David Elder, 36, of Trenton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 4 for a moving traffic violation.

Adriahna Alivia Jade Harper, 22, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 4 for battery and simple assault.

Ja'Koria Ka'Sharenee Hines, 27, of Gainesville, was arrested by Lawtey police on February 1 for a moving traffic violation.

Troy Austin Jackson, 29, of Middleburg, was arrested by

Bradford deputies on February 3 for a probation violation.

Irma Alvarez Kight, 71, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 3 for a probation violation.

Tyrone King, 65, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 6 for a parole violation.

Mark Timothy Kurimay, 44, of Graham, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 6 for possessing drugs, possessing drug equipment, and an out-of-county warrant.

Richard Hadden Lamb, 30, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 31 for failure to appear.

Elijah Andrew Lawrence, 48, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 1 for battery and kidnapping/false imprisonment.

Jack Thomas Manucy, 31, of Middleburg, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 3 for a moving traffic violation.

Tonnie Michelle Martin, 28, of Florahome, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 4 for battery.

Christopher Mark McElrath, 21, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 2 for an out-of-county warrant.

David James Nicklas, 42, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 2 for lewd and lascivious behavior and battery.

James Stanton Perry, 50, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 2 for battery and resisting an officer.

Douglas Aaron Redding, 33, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 5 for withholding support and an out-of-county warrant.

Curtis Shell, 64, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 5 for a probation violation.

Noah Alexander Shores, 25, of Waldo, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 3 for a

probation violation.

Daniel Doyce Wishart, 30, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on February 2 for aggravated assault with a weapon.

### Union

Heather Nicole Elixson, 33, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on February 7 for possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of cocaine, and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.

Jenny Kay Hernandez, 35, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on February 4 for violation of probation.

Robert Leo Magnant, 66, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on February 3 for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill and criminal mischief damage to property \$1000 or more. He was arrested again on February 9 for a conditional release violation.

James Cason Norman Jr., 35, of Raiford, was arrested by Union deputies on February 4 for battery causing bodily harm.

Derrick Andrew Richardson, 40, of Lacrosse, was arrested by Union deputies on February 6 for battery on a person 65 years of age or older.

Derrien Cordette Williams, 18, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on February 9 for petit theft first degree (\$100 or more but less than \$750).

Derrick Andrew Richardson, 40, of Lacrosse, was arrested by Union deputies on February 6 for battery on a person 65 years of age or older.

### Clay

Samuel Eugene Hartley, 22, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on February 6 for battery.

Sherry Lynn Wheeler, 37, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on February 5 for possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, and possession and/or use of drug equipment.

## SCHOOLS

Continued from page 6

to avoid starting work and then running out of money before the next payment arrives. The district received its first allocation in October and is seeking the second during this year's legislative session.

"What I didn't want to do was have a groundbreaking ceremony, and nothing happens for several months because that demoralizes people," Ripplinger explained. "When we actually do that, then pretty much every day thereafter, people are going to be able to drive by the site, and they're going to start seeing the progress."

The superintendent has solicited input from teachers at each grade level on classroom design,

including decisions about built-in storage, shared bathrooms, and flooring materials. The two-story building will house separate wings for primary and intermediate grades.

### Looking Ahead

As the district awaits state funding decisions and works to compete for students in an increasingly choice-driven environment, Ripplinger remains focused on the relationships educators build with students and the comprehensive services public schools provide.

"We provide things that other avenues do not," he said. "We have teams of people that move in to help those students. These are things that we can offer that may or may not be offered in other locations."

The superintendent also noted

## Union County food distribution

Food is distributed in Union County at the Hal Y. Maines Community Center on the third Thursday of each month from 9-10:30 a.m. or while supplies last. The center is located at 155 NW Third St. in Lake Butler. The giveaway is sponsored by Florida Gateway Foodbank and Catholic Charities.

## SHOOTING

Continued from page 1

Following his release, Holton said he believed the couple was reconciling. However, he said he caught his partner buying a new cell phone to secretly communicate with someone else. Holton said he asked her to leave the home, and she did.

According to Holton, within two days of their separation, Joseph changed her TikTok bio from "happily married" to him to "happily engaged" to another individual. He claimed Joseph had never met this person in real

life until the day before the video was recorded, and that she was planning to relocate from Florida to San Antonio, Texas, with the individual.

The 47-year-old added that he had been the subject of a two-hour TikTok live session in which he was publicly criticized, and that he felt his reputation had been unfairly damaged. He said he wanted viewers to hear his account of events.

After airing his side of the story, Holton said he wished his former partner well.

"I love you very much," Holton said, addressing Joseph. "You deserve to be happy. You deserve peace. I want that for

you. I absolutely do. Whether the happiness or peace was with me or with anybody else, we all deserve to be happy."

Union County Sheriff's Captain Lyn Williams said up to four people witnessed the shooting near Providence. He added that Holton was at the residence when Joseph and Jimenez drove up to the property, presumably to collect Joseph's belongings before her move to Texas with Jimenez.

"I think it happened pretty quickly," the captain said. "Argument started, and boom. At least that's what we believe."

## CHAMBER

Continued from page 1

the fair, strawberry festival, and Christmas parade.

Crystal Rosier received the Judy Becker Volunteer of the Year award for her community service work. Rosier launched the Well Worn Way nonprofit in August, which rescues functional household items and redistributes them to families in need.

"The bed poverty in this town is really heavy on my heart, the amount of children sleeping just wherever they fall," Rosier said in her acceptance speech. She is currently seeking a building to establish a thrift store to expand the organization's reach.

The chamber recognized outgoing board members Brad Smith, who served as chair for the past year and seven years total, Rhonda Hamilton after six years of service, and Steve

Futch, also completing six years.

Justis Smith was introduced as the 2026 chamber chair, with Scott Kornegay serving as chair elect and Chris Page as treasurer.

Event sponsors included First Federal Bank, VyStar Credit Union, DLP Bank, and Clay Electric Cooperative. Catering was provided by the Downtown Grill, with decorations by Leisa Sims and her team.



Leisa Sims, owner of It's Your Day Bridal & Formal Boutique, holds a bouquet and trophy after her business won the chamber's Business of the Year award. Also pictured are chamber officials and members of Sims's event team (l-r) outgoing Chamber Chair Brad Smith, Amber Zivitski (front), Paxton Zivitski (back), Reese Robinson, Brodix Zivitski (front), Harley Smith (back), Kaitlyn Gallaher, Sterling Zivitski and Chamber President Pam Whittle.



Crystal Rosier, winner of the Judy Becker Volunteer of the Year award, explains the origins of her nonprofit, The Well Worn Way, which matches pre-owned clothing, essentials, and other items with families facing hard times. Also pictured are outgoing Chamber Chair Brad Smith and Chamber President Pam Whittle.



Chamber board members (l-r) Jeff Oody, Treasurer, Chris Page, Chair-elect, Scott Kornegay, and Chair Justis Smith. Other board members are Harry Gunsallus, Dawn Strickland, Amber Shepherd, Denny Thompson, Brad Witt and Dale Woodruff.



Bradford County School District Teachers of the Year (l-r): District Teacher of the Year from Bradford Elementary, Bobbie Douglas; Starke Elementary's Jessica Archibald; Bradford Middle School's Phylcia Petteway; and Bradford High School's Rebecca Wilhite. Not pictured are Lawtey Elementary's Billy Stroud and David Bukowski from North Florida Technical College.



Seth Bell of Titan Chevrolet displays his J.E. Tomlinson Businessperson of the Year award with outgoing Chamber Chair Brad Smith and Chamber President Pam Whittle.



Bradford County School District School-Related Employees of the Year (l-r): District School-Related Employee of the Year, Starke Elementary's Dawn Cullingford, Christine Collins of the district office, Lawtey Elementary's Sandra Acree, Bradford High School's Stacy Dyal, Bradford Elementary's Cheryl Chalker, North Florida Technical College's Aleta Durant and Heath Vann from transportation and maintenance.



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# Bradford football trio takes part in National Signing Day

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School senior football players Kyren Green, Wilmarius Jackson and Jackson Parmeter signed letters of intent to play football at the next level during a Feb. 4 signing ceremony in the school's auditorium.

The National Signing Day event had offensive linemen Green and Jackson announce they were going to Division II schools — Green to Georgia's Valdosta State University and Jackson to Jacksonville's Edward Waters University. Parmeter, a safety, will be heading to Kansas City to join the Avila University program, which is a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Jackson said, "It feels really great to be able to play football in college," while Parmeter said he was "really and truly blessed."

"All the hard work I put in didn't go unnoticed," Parmeter said.

For Green, it's a chance to return to the field after missing a year. He's coming off a knee injury last spring.

"It's just really a sigh of relief," Green said. "A big weight was on my shoulders."

Green will join a Valdosta State program that played for the Division II national championship in 2024, finishing as runner-up with a season record of 13-1.

The Blazers weren't as successful in 2025, but did win the Gulf South Conference Championship and finishing with a 6-5 record.

In choosing Valdosta State,



Bradford senior football players (l-r) Wilmarius Jackson, Jackson Parmeter and Kyren Green signed letters of intent to play college ball during a Feb. 4 ceremony.

Green said, "I like how close they are, and I really like the coaching staff."

He also described the campus as "super chill," adding that it's his type of place.

As a junior, Green was part of an offensive line that helped Bradford run for 2,250 yards in 2024. The Tornadoes averaged 6.9 yards per rushing attempt.

Green, though, said he needs to improve in his run blocking as he prepares to transition to the next level. He feels pass blocking is his strength right now.

The tackle/guard, who was listed at 6-4, 310 on Bradford's 2024 roster, is one of five offensive linemen in Valdosta State's signing class. Green is also one of 16 Florida players in that class.

Jackson, a 6-5 tackle who transferred from Baker County, said he felt good about getting an opportunity to play in college, crediting "all the work I put in during the summer and all the studying of film." He added that the BHS coaching staff helped get him to the next level.

As for choosing Edward Waters, Jackson said it's a good school that also doesn't take him

too far from home.

"I can visit my family anytime I want, and they can visit me," Jackson said.

That also means being able to enjoy home-cooked meals, which Jackson cited as a plus.

In looking at his game, Jackson said his goals are to become more aggressive and to make strides in the weightroom.

"I just need to get to a bigger and better level than I am at now, so I can improve," Jackson said.

Parmeter, a transfer from Keystone Heights, recorded 57 tackles for the Tornadoes in 2025. He considered Georgia's Reinhardt University and Thomas University, but he said that "at the end of the day, I just had to pick what's best for me and my future."

What was best was Avila. Parmeter said Head Coach Ed Warinner was the appeal. Warinner was the offensive coordinator on Ohio State's 2014 national-championship team and has extensive Division-I experience at schools such as Illinois, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota and Notre

See TRIO, page 11

# Union's Lasseter will play baseball at Glenville St.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

It was a quick recruiting process, but that's because Union County High School senior Erick Lasseter found a place that truly feels like home.

Lasseter signed a letter of intent to play baseball at Division II Glenville State University during a Jan. 28 ceremony in the UCHS media center.

"It just felt like somewhere I wanted to be for the next four years," Lasseter said of the West Virginia school.

UCHS Head Coach Jiwan James said Lasseter had become frustrated when he wasn't hearing from colleges. James told him he needed to change his body, so Lasseter hit the weight room.

"He took it to heart, and he went to work," James said.

Lasseter said, "I really started looking at myself and realized that I had to get myself prepared for the next level."

He posted videos of himself on X, which were seen by a Glenville State coach. The coach was already aware of Lasseter, but he was impressed with the new-look Lasseter. Lasseter went on a visit to Glenville State and received an offer.

"This recruitment process literally happened about a two-week span," James said, adding, "That just goes to show that the weight room and doing what you're supposed to do pay off."

Lasseter said, "When I got there, it just felt like home. They're about the same size as Lake Butler. Everybody knew each other."

The fact that Lasseter did what he needed in order to change



Erick Lasseter sits between parents Beverly and John during his signing ceremony. He'll play baseball at Glenville State University in West Virginia.

physically was no surprise to James.

"His work ethic put him in this position," James said. "For four years now, I've watched him show up every single morning that we had workouts."

James said the only workouts Lasseter missed this past fall were on Friday mornings. Lasseter was on the UCHS football team, so James told him not to show up on Fridays.

Lasseter is going to Glenville State to play at first or third base, which are the same positions he's played at UCHS. James said Lasseter, who also pitches for the Tigers, could play anywhere defensively.

"He's very versatile and reliable," James said. "He's going to make all the plays."

Lasseter is coming off a 2025 season in which he was second on the team in batting average at .337. The lefty batter led the team in RBI with 26 and drew the most walks at 20. He was tied for second in fewest strikeouts and was third in fielding percentage at .972.

"He gives us really good at-bats," James said. "He doesn't swing at a lot of bad pitches."

A versatile player in the field and a solid bat. That's what Glenville State will get with

Lasseter, but James said the Pioneers will also get a leader with an outgoing personality.

"It won't be like he's a new kid," James said. "He's never met a stranger. He's not going to be some quiet kid going up there. He's going to be a leader from day one."

In fact, Lasseter is already bonding with his future teammates.

"I think I'm going to fit in really good," he said. "When I went up there for my visit and everything, I got to spend all day with the team. They all had conversations with me. I've got them all on social media already. We've already got a good connection."

His personality will help him settle in at a campus that's 700-plus-miles from home.

"It's going to hurt me a little bit at first," Lasseter said of being away from home, "but once I get up there, and I start meeting all the boys and hanging out with them, it's going to feel like I'm in Lake Butler."

Before that, though, Lasseter is ready for his last season at UCHS.

"I hope in my senior year that my boys and I go win a state

See SIGN, page 11

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# Obituaries

## William Bullard Sr.



William David Bullard Sr., 88, of Starke, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026. He was born April 26, 1937, in Miami to Eric and Nettie Bullard. William was united in marriage to the love of his life, Joan E. Perry, on Sept. 2, 1956. Joan preceded him in death. Together they raised three children, Carol, David, and Karen. William spent his working years as a skilled boiler maker and was a proud member of Local Union 199.

He is survived by his three children, Carol Lynn (Eddie) Stillely, David (Teresa) Bullard, and Karen (Bob) Hamilton. He was a proud grandfather to 10 grandchildren, Jenny, Bonnie, Brandi, Billy, Jessie, Keri, Destiny, Crystal, Sky, and Amber. He is also survived by his great-grandchildren, Nathan, Peyton, Kyle, Kolby, Derrick, Kylie, Caleb, Abby, Tristan, Ariana, Karlee, Emmitt, Zy'Nia, Luca, Lejla, Gabriel, Grayson, and Amiyah.

William will be remembered as a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather whose legacy of love and hard work lives on through his family.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke 32091 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY

## Mary Hewitt

Mrs. Mary Hewitt, 79, of Starke died at home on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026, with her children and sister at her side after a long and difficult battle with cancer. She was born in Thomas County, Georgia to Martin and Myrtice (Reagan) Chastain. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Walter "Woody" Hewitt.

Survivors are her children, Robert Dixon, Pam Dixon, and (Shaun) Amy; sister, Diane Garrison; brother, Bobby Chastain; five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

A graveside service was held Monday, Feb. 9, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating. Interment was at Crosby Lake Cemetery.

Arrangements were under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

## Rachael Kerr

Rachael Renee "Rae Rae" Kerr, 43, of Starke died Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026, at her residence. She was born in Lake Forest, Illinois on Aug. 31, 1982, to parents Ralph Leidy and Marjorie Jewett. She was preceded in death by her maternal grandparents, Vern and Marge Jewett; and paternal grandfather, Ralph Leidy.

Survivors are her parents, Ralph Leidy and Marjorie (Pat) Morton; children, Cameron Belecour, Raclan Kerr and Brody Kerr; brother, Nick (Sadia) Leidy; paternal grandmother, Mary Leidy; and extended family members and friends.

Services will be Saturday, Feb. 21, at 1 p.m. at Unity Baptist Church with Pastor Richard Harrison officiating.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services, Starke 904-964-5757. Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family's guest book.

## Emma Jean Redding



Emma Jean Davis Redding passed away Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026, at St. Vincent's in Middleburg, following treatment after breaking her hip in December 2025. She was born in Pensacola to Benjamin Leopold and Flossie Aline Johnson Davis. She grew up learning to hold her own, being the only girl in the house. Her childhood consisted of crabbing, swimming in the bayou, and roller skating down Bayou Boulevard. She graduated from Pensacola High School in 1944. She met her future husband, Norman Lyle Redding, through mutual friends and they were married Jan. 21, 1945. They were married for 54 wonderful years before Norman passed away in 1999. Their son, Norman (Butch) Jr. was born in 1948. In 1955, they moved to Birmingham, Alabama for Norman to attend Howard College. Then in 1958, they moved to New Orleans, Louisiana for Norman to attend New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Emma Jean proudly received her "PHD" (putting him through) degree by working at American Standard. Before and after graduation, they served in several Baptist churches in Louisiana and Alabama. Their daughter, Christie Jean, was born while they were serving at Brushy Creek Baptist Church in 1960. The family moved to Starke in December 1962 when Norman became the Death Row chaplain at Florida State Prison. After substituting for several years, Emma Jean became attendance clerk at Bradford High School in 1968, a position she held until her retirement in 1992. Her familiar, "This is Emma Jean Redding from the high school," became legendary in the community. She knew when students were out sick, on vacation, or skipping. The Starke police even used her knowledge of students to help solve a local robbery. She was honored in 2019 as a "Leave a Legacy" recipient by the Bradford Education Foundation. Her hobbies included sewing and cooking. She made Christie's prom dresses and everyday clothes. When grandchildren came along, she sewed each grand a special blanket when they were born. She also made many Halloween costumes and costumes for her to dress up at BHS. She loved to cook for others. After moving into their new house, she loved to host many meals. These included the BHS staff for meals on planning days, Valentine's banquets for widows, and many Tuesday night suppers for family, friends and people she just met! She also sent many birthday cards over the years and was a season ticket holder for the Bradford Tornadoes football team for many years (top row!). She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Norman; brothers, Benjamin Davis Jr., William Davis, Robert Davis, John Davis, and Thomas Davis; and sister, Fay Aline (who passed at 2.5 years).

She is survived by son, Col. (Ret.) Norman (Mary) Redding; daughter, Christie R. (Carl) Torode; brother, Charles (Sandra) Davis; grandchildren, Robert Andrew (Jenny) Redding, Norman James Redding, Shelley T. (Josh) Luke and Amanda T. (Danny) Hamilton; great-grandchildren: Remington, Kimber, Raegan, Judson, Laken, Brooke, Leah, Holston, Tate and Trisha; and great-great-grandchild, Lindsey. She is also survived by sisters-in-law, Rose Marie, Marilyn and Sue; and many nieces and nephews.

Emma Jean has been a faithful member of Kingsley Lake Baptist Church for many years. The family will receive friends at DeWitt C. Jones Chapel of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 pm. Funeral services will be on Friday, Feb. 13, at 10:30 a.m. at Kingsley Lake Baptist Church with interment following at Kingsley Lake Baptist Church Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Arkadelphia Baptist Church, 8368 S.R. 91, Hanceville, AL 35077 or to the Bradford County Education Foundation 501 W. Washington St., Starke 32091.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com.

PAID OBITUARY

## BHS boys are 2nd in district after loss to Newberry

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School let a slim lead slip away, being outscored 15-3 in a 60-49 loss to host and top seed Newberry in the championship game of the District 3-3A boys basketball tournament on Feb. 7.

Despite the loss, the second seed Tornadoes (17-5) received an at-large bid to the Region 1 playoffs. As the fifth seed, they'll travel to DeFuniak Springs to play fourth seed Walton (21-4) in a quarterfinal game on Saturday, Feb. 14, at 7 p.m. Central Time.

Bradford scored the first five points off a Kemontae Nixon layup and a Steven Carter three-pointer, but Newberry (19-3) went on a 17-2 run that extended into the second quarter. Colton Sembower scored the Panthers' first six points, including two off a steal by Darius Debose. Another turnover led to a three-pointer by Henry Mathias. Newberry also got a three-pointer from Juwan Scipio, which helped the Panthers go into the second quarter leading 15-7.

A steal by Kai Washington led to a basket by Brandon Kelly that put Newberry up 17-7 early in the second quarter.

The Tornadoes missed eight straight field-goal attempts during the Panthers' run before K.J. Taylor scored on a drive to the basket. Later, with Newberry leading 20-9, Taylor sank a three-point shot. That started a 7-2 Bradford run. Jy'Quez Cason had a basket in transition following a Maliki Cobarris defensive rebound, while Breion Johnson got a layup off a Jordan Cason assist. After the Panthers' Mathias scored a bucket, Cobarris was successful on a drive to the basket, drawing a foul in the process. He made the ensuing free-throw attempt to leave the Tornadoes trailing 22-19.

The margin remained at three points at halftime.

An 8-1 run in the third quarter gave Bradford its first lead since the opening quarter. It began with a rebound putback by Cobarris. Newberry then missed three field-goal attempts on its ensuing possession before Cobarris stole the ball, leading to a layup by Jy'Quez Cason. Another Cobarris steal led to an eventual score by Nixon, putting the Tornadoes ahead 31-30. After Scipio made a free throw for the Panthers, Jordan Cason had a basket to put Bradford up 33-31.

Newberry made 5 of 6 free throws in the latter stages of the third quarter to take a 36-35 lead.

A three-pointer by Nixon gave the Tornadoes a 44-43 lead. A turnover led to a layup by Sembower that put the Panthers back on top, but Bradford answered with a basket by Dylan Ruise, making it 46-45 in favor of the Tornadoes.

It would be the last lead for the Tornadoes, who were outscored 15-3 in the final 3:48. Bradford

went 1 of 4 from the field during that span, committing five turnovers, while Newberry made 13 of 16 free-throw attempts.

Cobarris led the Tornadoes with 16 points. Nixon scored seven points, while Jordan Cason and Jy'Quez Cason each had six. Bradford also got five points from Taylor, four from Ruise, three from Carter and two from Johnson.

## Tornadoes defeat Baldwin in semis

Carter made four three-pointers as part of a 27-point first quarter as Bradford built a

huge lead and went on to defeat visiting Baldwin 69-48 in District 3-3A semifinal game on Feb. 12.

It was a fast start, to say the least. Carter started the scoring with his first three-pointer, followed by a two-point basket from teammate Jy'Quez Cason.

Bradford scored the first five points off a Kemontae Nixon layup and a Steven Carter three-pointer, but Newberry (19-3) went on a 17-2 run that extended into the second quarter. Colton Sembower scored the Panthers' first six points, including two off a steal by Darius Debose. Another turnover led to a three-pointer by Henry Mathias. Newberry also got a three-pointer from Juwan Scipio, which helped the Panthers go into the second quarter leading 15-7.

A steal by Kai Washington led to a basket by Brandon Kelly that put Newberry up 17-7 early in the second quarter. A free throw by Ruise was the only point in the first five minutes from Marc Micale and Noah Baldwin got a three-point play a three-minute mark, while Tyrese Chandler knocked down a jumper to help the Tigers cut their deficit to single digits with less than one minute remaining in the half, but two free throws by Owens sent Trenton into the half leading 22-11.

The scoring screeched to a halt in the second quarter. A free throw by Ruise was the only point in the first five minutes from Marc Micale and Noah Baldwin got a three-point play a three-minute mark, while Tyrese Chandler knocked down a jumper to help the Tigers cut their deficit to single digits with less than one minute remaining in the half, but two free throws by Owens sent Trenton into the half leading 22-11.

The Indians opened the third quarter with an 8-0 run, getting two baskets from Demond Allen as well as scores by Jordan Goodrich and Doss. Cobarris and Jy'Quez Cason were the only players to score for Bradford in the third quarter as the Tornadoes were outscored 19-8 making it a 10-point game. Bradford quickly extended its lead to 19 points to start the fourth quarter. Bryston Williams had the first point of the quarter, followed by consecutive baskets by Jy'Quez Cason — one of which was a three-pointer. Cobarris then added two free throws to put the Tornadoes up 55-36.

It was a big quarter for Cobarris, who scored nine points and finished with a game-high 27. Carter added his fifth three-pointer of the game in the final quarter, giving him 15 points total.

The Tornadoes also got 13 points from Jy'Quez Cason, seven from Jordan Cason, two each from Williams, Nixon and Ja'Kaveon Nixon and one from Ruise.

With less than two minutes remaining, VunCannon made two free throws to put Trenton up by 11. Smith then had a basket

## UCHS boys lose 48-43, are district runners-up

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School outscored host and top seed Trenton 18-13 in the final quarter, but it wasn't enough for the second seed Tigers in a 48-43 loss in the championship game of the District 6-Rural boys basketball tournament on Feb. 7.

Despite the loss, the second seed Tigers (14-8) received an at-large berth in the Region 3 playoffs. They'll be seeded third and travel to play second seed Hilliard (17-5) in a semifinal game on Saturday, Feb. 14, at 7 p.m.

It's the first time Union's qualified for the regional playoffs in 13 years.

Union, which never led against Trenton and trailed by double digits for most of the game, fell behind 10-0. Jaylen Pierre hit a pull-up jumper to score the Tigers' first points with less than three minutes remaining in the first quarter. It was the first of three baskets he had in the quarter as Union pulled to within 10-6.

The Tigers, unfortunately, didn't shoot well in the first half, making just five of its 21 field-goal attempts. A rebound putback by Jackson Andersen-Davis left Union trailing 13-8, but Trenton (22-put Newberry up 17-7 early in the second quarter. A free throw by Ruise was the only point in the first five minutes from Marc Micale and Noah Baldwin got a three-point play a three-minute mark, while Tyrese Chandler knocked down a jumper to help the Tigers cut their deficit to single digits with less than one minute remaining in the half, but two free throws by Owens sent Trenton into the half leading 22-11.

Union scored six of the first nine points of the third quarter. Baskets by Chandler, Odom and Pierre made it a 25-17 game. Andersen-Davis scored off rebound and was fouled, making the awarded free throw and leaving the Tigers trailing 27-20. Trenton's Micale, though, got an old-fashioned three-point play of his own to increase Union's deficit to 10, which was the margin entering the final quarter.

The Tigers' Garrison Smith, who didn't score in the first three quarters, sank a three-point shot early in the fourth to make it an eight-point game, but Trenton's Tyler Bullis answered by sinking his own three-point shot. It was Trenton's fifth three-point basket of the game.

With less than two minutes remaining, VunCannon made two free throws to put Trenton up by 11. Smith then had a basket

for the Tigers before Trenton's Micale was fouled with 1:06 to play. Micale made 1 of 2 free-throw attempts to make it a 44-34 game.

Odom scored on a drive to the basket. H was fouled on the play and made the awarded free throw to cut Trenton's lead to seven.

Bullis went to the foul line with 46 seconds on the clock, making both free throws to extend Trenton's lead to nine. After a missed shot by Union, Bullis was sent to the foul line again. This time, he missed both attempts with 28 seconds to play.

Smith made a three-pointer to make the score 46-40 before Trenton's Nathan Ridgell sank two free throws with eight seconds on the clock.

Another three-point basket by Smith as time expired gave him 13 points for the game. Odom finished with nine, while Chandler and Pierre each had eight. Andersen-Davis added five points.

## Tigers defeat Fort White in semifinals

Union scored 19 of the game's first 23 points and had three players finish with at least 10 points in a 49-33 win over visiting Fort White in a District 6-Rural tournament semifinal game on Feb. 5.

A three-pointer by Pierre sparked a 13-0 run by the Tigers. Montrell Woods scored consecutive baskets off offensive rebounds. He was fouled on the second basket, adding the free throw to put Union up by eight. Woods later added another score, while Smith knocked down a three-pointer to give the Tigers a 15-2 lead.

Two free throws each from Smith and Adrian Manns put Union up 19-4.

Chandler had consecutive baskets late in the second quarter to help send the Tigers into halftime leading 25-14.

The third seed Indians (7-13) scored the first seven points of the third quarter to make it a four-point game. Union didn't score until approximately three minutes remained in the quarter, getting a basket from Chandler. Chandler was also fouled on the play, making the awarded free throw to make it a 28-21 game.

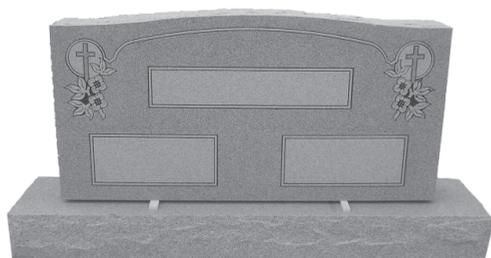
Darion Brinson made a three-point shot for Fort White, but the Tigers then got two free throws and a rebound putback from Manns for an eight-point Union lead. Brinson had a basket for the Indians with 26 seconds remaining in the third quarter, but a Chandler basket off an offensive rebound sent Union into the final quarter with a 34-26 lead.

Manns scored six points in the fourth quarter to finish with a team-high 12.

Chandler and Smith had 11 and 10 points, respectively, while the Tigers also got nine points from Woods, five points from Pierre and two points from Andersen-Davis.

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# Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Feb. 12, 2026

## BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CASE NO.: 04 2025 CA 000457  
VYSTAR CREDIT UNION,  
Plaintiff,

UNKNOWN HEIRS, SPOUSES, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, CREDITORS, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF DEBRA ILENE HUNTER F/K/A DEBRA ILENE MILLER; LORA O'MARA; APRIL M. OLIVER; AMY R. EBENAL; HOLLY BROWN A/K/A HOLLY WHITTINGTON; RONALD ADAM MILLER; CHRISTOPHER J. MILLER; UNKNOWN TENANT NO. 1; UNKNOWN TENANT NO. 2, Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION  
TO: Ronald Adam Miller  
500 South 17th Street  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS STATED, and any unknown heirs, devisees, grantees, creditors, and other unknown persons claiming by, through, and under the above-named Defendant, if deceased or whose last known addresses are unknown.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property in Bradford County, Florida: LOT 10 AND 11, BLOCK 15, WARD CITY, NOW KNOWN AS THE CITY OF BROOKER, AS PER PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 21 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA. LESS AND EXCEPT THEREFROM THE EASTERLY 25 FEET OF SAID LOT 11, (WC)

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 18737 Charlotte Avenue, Brooker, FL 32622 has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Adam G. Schwartz, Esq., the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is 819 SW Federal Hwy, Suite 301, Stuart, FL 34994, within 30 days, and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on the plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.

DATE: January 23, 2026  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
By: KANETRA JENKINS  
Deputy Clerk

2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. 2025 CA 000189  
FLORIDA CREDIT UNION,  
Plaintiff,

vs. MARGARET SILCOX, JASON SILCOX, U.S. SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, STARKE HMA, LLC, AND UNKNOWN PARTY IN POSSESSION, Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE  
Notice is hereby given that the Bradford County Clerk of Court will on February 26, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. EST, at the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091 offer for sale and sell at public outcry, one by one, to the highest bidder for cash, the property located in Bradford County, Florida, as follows:

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED LAND LOCATED IN THE COUNTY OF BRADFORD, STATE OF FLORIDA, TO WHIT: THE EAST ONE-HALF OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PARCEL OF LAND: COMMENCE 200 FEET WEST OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE WEST 1/2 OF SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF NORTHWEST 1/4 AND RUN SOUTH 517.4 FEET FOR POINT OF BEGINNING, THENCE CONTINUE SOUTH 170 FEET WEST, 419 FEET TO EAST RIGHT-OF-WAY OF STATE ROAD 200; THENCE NORTH ALONG ROAD 170 FEET, EAST 406.75 FEET TO POINT OF BEGINNING, LYING AND BRING SITUATED IN SECTION 10, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 22, TOGETHER WITH A 2003 MOBILE HOME ID# FLHML2F157826979A AND ID# FLHML2F157826979B WHICH IS PERMANENTLY AFFIXED TO THE LANDS ABOVE-DESCRIBED AND, AS SUCH DEEMED TO BE A FIXTURE AND PART OF THE REAL ESTATE.

pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered on January 12, 2026, in the above-styled cause, pending in said Court.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim with the Clerk no later than the date the Clerk reports the funds as unclaimed.

s/ Stephen Orsillo  
Stephenson Orsillo (FL Bar # 89377) of Sorenson Van Leuven, PLLC  
Post Office Box 3637  
Tallahassee, Florida 32315-3637  
Telephone (850) 388-0500/Facsimile (850) 391-6800  
creservice@svllaw.com (E-Service E-Mail Address)  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

NOTICE OF SALE  
T & M Towing gives notice of lien and intent to sell this vehicle on February 16th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at T & M Towing storage yard located at 3687 Ambient Air Rd., Starke, FL 32091. T & M Towing reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids.  
2012 Dodge  
Vin# 2C3CDXAT6CH181807  
2006 Dodge  
Vin# 1D4HD48N66F111580  
2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

### LEGAL NOTICE:

The Bradford County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Planning Committee/Workgroup will meet Thursday, February 19th, 2026 at 3:00 PM in the Bradford County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in the Bradford County Sheriff's Office at 945B North Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091. Bradford County Emergency Management encourages any interested citizens and business owners to attend and provide input. The Committee guides the preparation and contents of the Bradford County Local Mitigation Strategy which serves as the plan submitted to the Florida Division of Emergency Management to reduce the community's long-term risk for protecting people and property from the effects of natural disasters and to build a safer and stronger community. This public meeting is being conducted in a handicapped accessible location. Any handicapped person wanting to attend the meeting and requires assistance with accessibility and/or interpretation should contact the Bradford County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management Division at (904) 966-6336 at least 5 calendar days prior to the meeting date. Any person wishing to provide comments who cannot attend the meeting may do so by submitting written comments via email to bcm@bradfordsheriff.org at least 5 calendar days prior to the meeting date. The meeting agenda may be obtained within 5 days of the meeting date via email request as well, or by visiting www.bradfordsheriff.org/emergencymanagement/lms/. Please contact the Bradford County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management Division at (904) 966-6336 for more information.

A FAIR HOUSING/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE JURISDICTION  
2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. 25000439CAAXMX  
PLANET HOME LENDING, LLC,  
Plaintiff,

vs. JONATTAN H. BARRANCO PINTO, et al. Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION - CONSTRUCTIVE SERVICE  
TO: JONATTAN H. BARRANCO PINTO, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF JONATTAN H. BARRANCO PINTO, whose residence is unknown and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title or interest in the property described in the mortgage being foreclosed herein.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property:  
LOT 6, A PARCEL OF LAND LYING IN THE NORTHEAST 1/4 OF SECTION 11, TOWNSHIP 7 SOUTH, RANGE 21 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT AN IRON PIPE LOCATED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID NORTHEAST 1/4 AND RUN SOUTH 01 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 19 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE WESTERLY BOUNDARY THEREOF, 690.25 FEET; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 46 MINUTES 41 SECONDS EAST, 192.00 FEET FOR THE POINT OF BEGINNING. FROM POINT OF BEGINNING THENCE CONTINUE NORTH 88 DEGREES 46 MINUTES 41 SECONDS EAST, 132.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 01 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 19 SECONDS EAST, PARALLEL WITH SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY 330.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 46 MINUTES 41 SECONDS WEST, 132.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 01 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 19 SECONDS WEST, PARALLEL WITH SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY, 330.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, RESERVING THEREFROM AN EASEMENT FOR INGRESS AND EGRESS OVER THE NORTHERLY 30.00 FEET THEREOF.

ABOVE DESCRIBED PARCEL BEING CONVEYED WITH AN EASEMENT OF INGRESS AND EGRESS LYING 30.00 FEET ON EACH SIDE OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED CENTERLINE: COMMENCE AT AN IRON PIPE LOCATED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID NORTHEAST 1/4 AND RUN SOUTH 01 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 19 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE WESTERLY BOUNDARY THEREOF, 1300.25 FEET TO THE NORTHERLY BOUNDARY OF THE RIGHT OF WAY OF COUNTY ROAD 225; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 32 MINUTES 11 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID NORTHERLY BOUNDARY, 30.035 FEET TO THE CENTERLINE OF A 60.00 FOOT ROAD FOR THE POINT OF BEGINNING. FROM POINT OF BEGINNING THENCE DECEIBED RUN NORTH 01 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 19 SECONDS WEST,

2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

ALONG SAID CENTERLINE AND PARALLEL WITH SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY, 611.40 FEET; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 46 MINUTES 41 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID CENTERLINE, 558.00 FEET TO THE END OF SAID CENTERLINE. TOGETHER WITH - 56 X 30 2024 MOBILE HOME; VIN #S FL261-000-H-A105729A/B. has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on counsel for Plaintiff, whose address is 6409 Congress Avenue, Suite 100, Boca Raton, Florida 33487 on or before 1/30 days from Date of First Publication of this Notice) and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition filed herein. WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court at Bradford County, Florida, this 26 day of January, 2026.  
Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC  
6409 Congress Ave., Suite 100  
Boca Raton, FL 33487  
PRIMARY EMAIL: fmail@raslg.com  
THIS NOTICE SHALL BE PUBLISHED ONCE A WEEK FOR TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.  
PUBLISH IN: BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH  
DENNY THOMPSON  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
BY: KANETRA JENKINS  
DEPUTY CLERK  
25-339947 2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

2/5 2tchg 2/12-BCT

NOTICE OF SALE  
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801 - 83.809); Santa Fe Storage of Waldo. Will sell for CASH to the highest bidder on Storageauctions.net

For location at 15540 NE HWY 301, Waldo, County of Alachua, Florida; ending at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, the 25th day of February 2026, and continuing day to day thereafter until sold: the household goods and misc. contents of the following:  
D008 Katriena Tarantino  
2/12 2tchg 2/19-BCT

2/12 2tchg 2/19-BCT

NOTICE OF SALE  
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801 - 83.809); Santa Fe Storage of Starke will sell for cash to the highest bidder on storageauctions.net for location at 1630 North Temple Ave, Starke, County of Bradford, FL, at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, the 25th day of February; 2026 and continuing day to day thereafter until sold: the household goods and misc. contents of the following:  
08015 Leeshell Demps  
08027 Cynthia Webb  
08012 Ida Henderson  
2/12 2tch 2/19-BCT

2/12 2tch 2/19-BCT

NOTICE OF AGENCY ACTION  
TAKEN BY THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
Notice is given that on February 4, 2026 the District issued Permit No. 433-9 for a Consumptive Use Permit to serve commercial/industrial use activities. The total authorization is 61.5 mgy of (groundwater/surface water) and 119 mgy for emergency backup. The project is located in Bradford and Clay Counties. The permit applicant is The Chemours Company FC, LLC.

If you wish to receive a copy of a Technical Staff Report (TSR) that provides the St. Johns River Water Management District (District) staff's analysis on the above-listed compliance report(s) and associated permit(s), please submit your request to Office Director, Office of Records and Regulatory Support, PO Box 1429, Palatka, FL 32178-1429.

You may view the TSR by going to the Permitting section of the District's website at www.sjrwmd.com/permitting/index.html To obtain information on how to find and view a TSR, visit https://permitting.sjrwmd.com/epermitting/html/EP\_FAQS.html, and then follow the directions provided under "How to find a Technical Staff Report (TSR) or other application file documents."

A person whose substantial interests are or may be affected has the right to request an administrative hearing by filing a written petition with the District. Pursuant to Chapter 28-106 and Rule 40C-1.1007, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the petition must be filed (received) either by delivery at the office of the District Clerk at District Headquarters, P. O. Box 1429, Palatka Florida 32178-1429 (4049 Reid St., Palatka, FL 32177) or by e-mail with the District Clerk at Clerk@sjrwmd.com, within twenty-one (21) days of newspaper publication of the notice of District decision (for those persons to whom the District does not mail or email actual notice). A petition for an administrative hearing is deemed filed upon receipt of the complete petition by the District Clerk at the District Headquarters in Palatka, Florida during the District's regular business hours. The District's regular business hours are 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., excluding weekends and District holidays. Petitions received by the District Clerk after the District's regular business hours shall be deemed filed as of 8 a.m. on the next regular District business day. A petition must comply with Sections 120.54(5)(b)4.

2/12 2tch 2/19-BCT

and 120.569(2)(c), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Chapter 28-106, F.A.C. The District's acceptance of petitions filed by e-mail is subject to certain conditions set forth in the District's Statement of Agency Organization and Operation (issued pursuant to Rule 28-101.001, F.A.C.), which is available for viewing at www.sjrwmd.com. The District will not accept a petition sent by facsimile (fax). Mediation may be available if you meet the conditions stated in the full Notice of Rights (see last paragraph). The right to administrative hearing and the relevant procedures to be followed are governed by Chapter 120, F.S., Chapter 28-106, F.A.C., and Rule 40C-1.1007, F.A.C. Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the filing of a petition means the District's final action may be different from the position taken by it in this notice. Failure to file a petition for an administrative hearing within the requisite time frame shall constitute a waiver of the right to an administrative hearing. (Rule 28-106.111, F.A.C.).  
If you wish to do so, please visit http://www.sjrwmd.com/nor\_dec/ to read the complete Notice of Rights to determine any legal rights you may have concerning the District's decision(s) on the Consumptive Use Permit Application(s) described above. You can also request the Notice of Rights by contacting the Office Director, Office of Records and Regulatory Support, P. O. Box 1429, Palatka, FL 32178, phone (386)329-4570.  
2/12 1tchg-BCT

2/12 1tchg-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION  
CASE NO. 25000030CAAXMX  
U.S. BANK TRUST COMPANY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE, AS SUCCESSOR-IN-INTEREST TO U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE, IN TRUST FOR REGISTERED HOLDERS OF FIRST FRANKLIN MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST, MORTGAGE LOAN ASSET-BACKED CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2007-FF2,

Plaintiff,

vs. THE UNKNOWN HEIRS, BENEFICIARIES, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHERS WHO MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST IN THE ESTATE OF CLYDE C. GRIFFIS A/K/A CLYDE C. GRIFFIS, JR. A/K/A CLYDE GRIFFIS, DECEASED, et al. Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated January 12, 2026, and entered in 25000030CAAXMX of the Circuit Court of the EIGHTH Judicial Circuit in and for Bradford County, Florida, wherein U.S. BANK TRUST COMPANY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE, AS SUCCESSOR-IN-INTEREST TO U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE, IN TRUST FOR REGISTERED HOLDERS OF FIRST FRANKLIN MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST, MORTGAGE LOAN ASSET-BACKED CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2007-FF2 is the Plaintiff and THE UNKNOWN HEIRS, BENEFICIARIES, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHERS WHO MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST IN THE ESTATE OF CLYDE C. GRIFFIS, JR. A/K/A CLYDE GRIFFIS, DECEASED; DENISE GRIFFIS; MICHELLE TOMPKINS; AMY LAMB; DAPHNE LAMB are the Defendant(s). Denny Thompson as the Clerk of the Circuit Court will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at the Front Lobby 945 N. Temple Ave., Starke, FL 32091, at 11:00 AM, on March 12, 2026, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit: A PARCEL OF LAND CONTAINING 1.12 ACRES LYING IN THE NE1/4 OF THE NW1/4 OF SECTION 34, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 21 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT A CONCRETE MONUMENT LOCATED AT THE NE CORNER OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4 AND RUN NORTH 89° 07' 57" WEST, ALONG THE NORTHERLY BOUNDARY THEREOF, 64.84 FEET TO A CONCRETE MONUMENT LOCATED ON THE WESTERLY BOUNDARY OF THE R/W OF COUNTY ROAD 225 (FORMERLY STATE ROAD 225); THENCE SOUTH 00°17' 40" EAST ALONG SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY, 957.02 FEET TO AN IRON PIPE FOR A POINT OF BEGINNING. FROM POINT OF BEGINNING THUS DESCRIBED CONTINUE SOUTH 00° 17' 40" EAST ALONG SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY, 206.50 FEET TO A CONCRETE MONUMENT LOCATED 142.5 FEET NORTHERLY OF THE SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4; THENCE NORTH 89° 44' 36" WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4, 234.97 FEET TO A CONCRETE MONUMENT; THENCE NORTH 00° 36' 01" WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE EASTERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4, 206.50 FEET TO A CONCRETE MONUMENT; THENCE SOUTH 89° 44' 36" EAST, PARALLEL WITH AFORESAID SOUTHERLY

2/12 1tchg-BCT

BOUNDARY, 236.07 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

ALSO:  
A PARCEL OF LAND LYING IN THE NE1/4 OF THE NW1/4 OF SECTION 34, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 21 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA; SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT A CONCRETE MONUMENT FOUND AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4 AND RUN NORTH 89° 07' 57" WEST ALONG THE NORTHERLY BOUNDARY THEREOF, 64.84 FEET TO AN INTERSECTION WITH THE WESTERLY BOUNDARY OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF COUNTY ROAD 225 (FORMERLY STATE ROAD 225); THENCE SOUTH 00° 17' 40" EAST, ALONG SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY, 953.52 FEET TO A SET IRON ROD FOR THE POINT OF BEGINNING. FROM THE POINT OF BEGINNING THUS DESCRIBED CONTINUE SOUTH 00° 17' 40" EAST, ALONG SAID WESTERLY BOUNDARY, 3.50 FEET TO A FOUND IRON PIPE; THENCE NORTH 89° 44' 36" WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4, A DISTANCE OF 236.07 FEET TO A FOUND CONCRETE MONUMENT; THENCE NORTH 00° 36' 01" WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE EASTERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID NE1/4 OF NW1/4, A DISTANCE OF 3.50 FEET TO A SET IRON ROD; THENCE SOUTH 89° 44' 36" EAST, PARALLEL WITH SAID SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY, 236.09 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Property Address: 9495 NW COUNTY RD 225, STARKE, FL 32091

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim in accordance with Florida Statutes, Section 45.031.

Dated this 9 day of February, 2026.  
ROBERTSON, ANSCHUTZ, SCHNEID, CRANE & PARTNERS, PLLC  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
6409 Congress Ave., Suite 100  
Boca Raton, FL 33487  
Telephone: 561-241-6901  
Facsimile: 561-997-6909  
Service Email: fmail@raslg.com  
By: \_SDDanielle Salem\_  
Danielle Salem, Esquire  
Florida Bar No. 0058248  
Communication Email: dsalem@raslg.com

2/12 1tchg-BCT

# Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Feb. 12, 2026

## UNION

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED**  
Notice is hereby given, that J.R. DAVIS, TRUSTEE OF THE J. R. DAVIS TRUST, the holder(s) of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:  
Certificate #: 223  
Year of Issuance: 2018  
Description of Property: 32-05-20-22-018-0022-0  
Legal Description:  
SW ¼ of Lot 2, Block 18, J.W. Townsend's addition, according to plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 8, Public Records of Union County, Florida.  
Name in which assessed: PORSHA T. RIDGEWAY AND HARMON RIDGEWAY, III.  
Said property being in the County of Union, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to the law, the property described in such certificate will be sold to the highest bidder in the Courthouse lobby at 11:00 A.M., the 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026.  
Dated this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of FEBRUARY, 2026.  
LESLIE C. SNYDER  
For Kellie Hendricks Rhoades  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
Union County, Florida  
Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact (386) 496-3711.  
2/5 4tchg 2/26-UCT

**REGULAR MEETING NOTICE**  
The City of Lake Butler City Commission will hold a REGULAR MEETING on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6:00pm at the City Commission Chambers located in City Hall at 200 SW 1st Street Lake Butler, FL 32054  
2/12 1tchg-UCT

## SIGN

Continued from page 8

championship," he said. "I feel like this year is going to be the year. Practice has been different. Everybody's been playing well together."

Many high school student-athletes believe they'll be nervous at first when they step onto the field for the first time as a collegiate athlete, but Lasseter isn't expecting that. Playing in college was what he set out to do. Now that he's committed to a school, he doesn't have to worry about making his dream come true.

"I'm going to be more relaxed (than nervous)," Lasseter said. "The weight's going to be off my

## LAKE REGION

Keystone Heights Charter Review Commission  
The five seats are now available for the formation of the City of Keystone Heights Charter Review Commission. Applications will be accepted from February 3 - 20, 2026, and the commission will be appointed by the City Council on March 2nd. If you would like to apply, please drop off the application at City Hall or email to officemanager@keystoneheights.us. Applications are available in City Hall or on our website, keystoneheights.us.  
2/12 1tchg-LRM

CITY OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS, FLORIDA  
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE 2026-617**

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Keystone Heights, Florida, will hold a public hearing for the second reading of an ordinance relating to smoking and vaping. The public hearing will be held during the regular City Council Meeting on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, at Keystone Heights City Hall, located at 555 S. Lawrence Boulevard, Keystone Heights, Florida. The proposed ordinance addresses the regulation and prohibition of smoking and vaping in designated public areas within the City of Keystone Heights in the interest of protecting public health, safety, and welfare. Interested parties may appear at the meeting and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for inspection at City Hall during normal business hours. If any person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, such person will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.  
2/12 1tchg-LRM

shoulders. I'm going to feel so calm out there.  
"I'm excited."

## SPACE FOR LEASE

- Starke, Close to downtown 1800+ sq.ft. Professional, general office, insurance, realtor, attorney, etc. Two restrooms, space flexible for small business. Rent \$1500/mth, utilities not included.  
Call (904)964-7404

## BHS, KHHS, UCHS softball teams set to start seasons

Bradford High School will open softball's regular season with a home game, while Keystone Heights and Union County will get their starts in road games.  
The Tornados will host Clay on Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 6 p.m. Union also plays on Feb. 17, traveling to Bartram Trail for a 7 p.m. game.

The Indians travel to play Interlachen on Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m.

## KHHS seasons end in districts

**BY CLIFF SMELLEY**  
cliff@bctelegraph.com  
Keystone Heights High School saw its boys and girls basketball seasons come to an end in their district tournaments.  
The girls team, which was seeded fourth, advanced to the semifinals of the District 3-3A tournament off a 33-31 win over

fifth seed Baldwin in a Feb. 2 quarterfinal game. Keystone (13-12) played top seed Newberry on Feb. 5, losing 78-40.

Newberry (19-4), which went on to finish as the runner-up to second seed Bradford, outscored the Indians 20-9 in the first quarter and 28-10 in the second, building a 29-point lead.

Keystone got 10 points each from Daisy Hubbard and Grace Keaton, while Kadence Massey and Rigby Morford scored nine and eight points, respectively.

The Telegraph-Times-Monitor didn't have complete scoring stats. Massey grabbed a team-high

12 rebounds and added four assists and three steals to her totals.

Keaton had nine rebounds, while Hubbard and Morford each had eight.

Keystone (7-15) was seeded sixth in the District 3-3A boys tournament. The Indians saw a three-game win streak come to an end with a 63-50 loss to third seed Baldwin in a Feb. 3 quarterfinal game.

The Telegraph-Times-Monitor didn't have stats for this game.

Baldwin (11-12) would go on to lose 69-48 to second seed Bradford in the semifinals.

## TRIO

Continued from page 8

Dame.  
Parmeter said Warinner is like the head coach he played for this past season.

"Just his background in coaching and the type of mentality he has reminds me of Coach (Jamie) Rodgers," Parmeter said. "It's what I'm used to in football."

The 5-10, 175-pound player,

who said he will be a hybrid nickel/safety at Avila, credited his transfer to Bradford for putting in this position, saying he became more physical as a player and learned to read plays better. Trying to improve, though, doesn't stop.

"I definitely need to get better in man-on-man and just get faster and stronger," Parmeter said.

All three players enjoyed being able to participate in a signing ceremony with teammates.

"It was a blessing," Green said. "It feels good just to see

them be able to play at the next level, too."

Jackson said, "It was a cool moment to know that the guys I played with get to play college football and do the things that I get to do. I'm just hoping that they can get better in the future like I want to do."

"It feels great. I mean, I didn't want all the attention on me," Parmeter said, adding, "I'm thankful that I got to share this opportunity with them and that God helped them in their lives."

As you can imagine, the

players expect to feel anxious when they step onto the field for the first time as college players, but they're ready to embrace their opportunities that will make longtime dreams come true.

"It's going to feel great," Jackson said. "I'm just hoping that it'll go great."

Green is more than ready to get back onto the field after being off it for a year.

"I know I'm going to have some nerves," he said, "but after those first two plays, I'll get over it."

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**INDEX**

40 Notice	57 For Sale
41 Vehicles Accessories	58 Building Materials
42 Motor Vehicles	59 Personal Services
43 RV's & Campers	60 Secretarial Services
44 Boats	61 Scriptures
45 Land for Sale	62 Vacation/Travel
46 Real Estate Out of Area	63 Love Lines
47 Commercial Property Rent, Lease, Sell	64 Business Opportunity
48 Homes for Sale	65 Help Wanted
49 Mobile Homes for Sale	66 Investment Opportunity
50 For Rent	67 Hunting Land for Rent
51 Lost/Found	68 Rent to Own
52 Animals & Pets	69 Food Supplements
53 Yard Sales	70 Money to Lend
54 Keystone Yard Sales	72 Sporting Goods
55 Wanted	74 Computers & Computer Accessories
56 Trade or Swap	

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# Lawtey's Scarberry is Bradford district spelling champ

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

In correctly spelling the word "mythical," sixth-grader Logan Scarberry of Lawtey Elementary School assured himself of a real victory at the Bradford County School District spelling bee, which was held Feb. 5 in the school board meeting room.

The event, sponsored by the Bradford County Education Foundation and WJXT Channel 4 of Jacksonville, consisted of seven participants representing Lawtey, Bradford and Starke elementary schools. Participants earned the right to compete at the district level by their placement at spelling bees at their respective schools.

None of Bradford Middle School's qualifiers for the district bee showed up.

After five rounds, it came down to Scarberry and Hunter Arwood, a sixth-grader who was Lawtey's school champion. To win, a participant had to spell two words correctly after the other participant missed one.

Scarberry correctly spelled "charitable" and "influential" to stay alive, while Arwood correctly spelled "squabble" and "obliterate." Scarberry then spelled "varnish" correctly, setting himself up to spell "mythical" for the win.

In the first five rounds, before all the other participants were eliminated, Scarberry correctly

spelled "remain," "modify," "gargle," "mince" and "portrait." Arwood correctly spelled "husk," "simmer," "muddle," "agility" and "escapade."

Scarberry will advance to the Florida Times-Union Regional Spelling Bee on Friday, Feb. 27, at 10 a.m. at the Jacksonville Public Library.

The two Lawtey students both received trophies. They and their parents will be recognized at the March 10 Bradford County School Board meeting, which will begin at 5 p.m.

Trophies and the prizes that all participants received were provided by the Bradford County Education Foundation, an all-volunteer nonprofit that supports

Bradford's public schools.

"I just want to brag on the education foundation for everything that they do for the school district and for putting this on every year," Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley said. "They do an amazing job. They raise bookodds of money that they forward directly back into our classrooms."

Also participating in the district bee were Bradford Elementary's Gabriel Heishman (sixth grade) and Lyla Libby (fifth grade) and Starke Elementary's Raegen Barber (fifth grade), Adam Hall (fifth grade) and Jase Hinson (fifth grade).

Heishman and Hinson were the champions at their respective school-level spelling bees.

Barber participated as an alternate.

Also qualifying for the district bee (but not participating) were Bradford Elementary's Sawyer Shuford (fifth grade), Lawtey Elementary's Eastwood Moody (sixth grade), Starke Elementary's Mackenzie Drake (sixth grade) and Bradford Middle's Amelia Cooper (eighth grade), Marie Karinen (eighth grade) and Jason Weeks (seventh grade).

Students besides Barber who were alternates were Bradford Elementary's Violet Driggers (sixth grade), Lawtey Elementary's Zakary Walker



Lawtey Elementary sixth-graders Logan Scarberry and Hunter Arwood were the champion and runner-up, respectively, at the Bradford County School District spelling bee. Pictured (l-r) are Bradford County Education Foundation Vice President Lila Sellars and President Cheryl Canova, Scarberry, Arwood and Bradford County Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley.



This year's district spelling bee participants were (l-r) Raegan Barber of Starke Elementary, Gabriel Heishman of Bradford Elementary, Logan Scarberry of Lawtey Elementary, Hunter Arwood of Lawtey Elementary, Adam Hall of Starke Elementary, Jase Hinson of Starke Elementary and Lyla Libby of Bradford Elementary.

(sixth grade) and Bradford Middle's Serenity Gorden (eighth grade).

Troy Appling served as the district spelling bee pronouncer, while judges were Bradford County Education Foundation members Angel Autry (secretary), Cheryl Canova

(president) and Lila Sellars (vice president).

School coordinators were Rebecca Ansley (Lawtey Elementary), Susie Couey (Bradford Elementary), Melissa Hines (Starke Elementary) and Phyllicia Petteway (Bradford Middle).

# Camp Blanding Museum seeking info on Black servicemen

BY GEORGE E. CRESSMAN JR.

Staff Historian, Camp Blanding Museum

The Camp Blanding Museum has initiated an effort to uncover and document the service of African American soldiers who served at Camp Blanding during World War II.

There were approximately 2,000 Black soldiers at Camp Blanding. During They were in one of two groups: those who came to Camp Blanding as part of a numbered unit (regiments, battalions and companies) and those who served in the camp's station complement.

More than 200 units of various sizes trained at Camp Blanding during World War II; 17 of those units were constituted with African American soldiers. The African American units that trained at Camp Blanding went on to serve in Alaska, Burma and the European Theater, providing critical support to the war effort.

The Black soldiers serving in Camp Blanding's station complement were assigned to either a service detachment or a quartermaster detachment. The service detachment kept the camp operating, providing construction and maintenance services and helping operate the

station hospital. The soldiers in the quartermaster detachment worked in the post's large warehouse facilities, providing the equipment, supplies and rations for soldiers training at Camp Blanding.

All U.S. armed forces were segregated until 1948. At Camp Blanding, this meant that the Black soldiers serving at the Post were quartered in a separate area and were provided separate mess halls. Black soldiers also had a separate service club and quest quarters, and they had a separate movie theater.

In March 1942, Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Sr. visited

Camp Blanding. Davis was the U.S. Army's first Black general officer. He visited Camp Blanding while on a tour of many of the Army's posts; his mission was to inspect the training of Black soldiers, their living, dining and recreational facilities, and to determine the morale of African American soldiers.

At the time of Davis' visit, there were just over 2,800 Black soldiers at Camp Blanding. Almost 1,000 of these soldiers were in the camp's station complement, with the rest assigned to five of the 17 Black units then training at Camp Blanding.

In addition to the Black soldiers, there were Black civilian employees working at the camp. Karlene D. Childs served as the senior hostess at the Black service club. She was assisted by Junior Hostess Alice M. Scott at the Black quest quarters and Ebbie P. Garlington, who served as the librarian at the service club. Inez B. Evans was the cafeteria hostess in the Black service club.

While it is possible, to some extent, to construct a history of the African American units that trained at Camp Blanding, there is currently no information on the Black soldiers who served in Camp Blanding's station

complement. There is no record of the names of any of the soldiers, including the African American soldiers, who trained at Camp Blanding. Further, there is no record of daily life for Black soldiers at Camp Blanding. The museum's staff historian would very much like to contact veterans or the families of African American veterans who served at Camp Blanding during World War II. We are particularly interested in memoirs, diaries and photos of Black soldiers who served at Camp Blanding. Please help us by contacting the museum by email at info@campblandingmuseum.org or by calling 904-682-3196.



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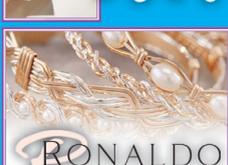
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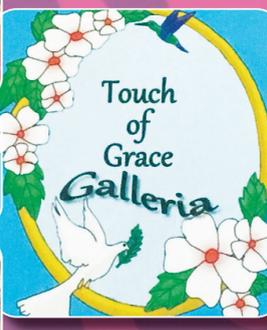



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# BHS girls defeat Newberry 64-62 to win district title

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

A double-digit deficit in the fourth quarter on the road isn't an ideal situation, but the Bradford High School girls basketball team didn't panic, rallying to defeat number-one seed Newberry 64-62 to win the District 3-3A tournament championship on Feb. 6.

"It was just one possession at a time," BHS Head Coach Sampson Jackson said. "We talked about winning segments of the game. They trusted each other and got it done."

Ar'Nayshia Griffin certainly got it done for the second seed Tornados, scoring 14 of her team-high 36 points in the fourth quarter, while teammate Riley Shuford had the basket that proved to be the eventual difference.

The result was the Tornados' first district title in 13 years.

"A lot of room for growth still, but I'm super proud of them for winning this," Jackson said.

Though winning its district, Bradford (16-9) will have to travel for a first-round playoff game. The Tornados earned the eighth and final seed in Region 1 and will play top seed Jacksonville Bolles (22-4) in a quarterfinal game on Friday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m. Bolles, which was the state runner-up last season, is also a district champ.

The Tornados got off to an incredible start against Newberry (19-4), scoring 19 of the game's first 21 points. Griffin got the scoring started when she grabbed a defensive rebound and dribbled the length of the court for a basket. Nyasia Lopey scored off a Griffin inbounds pass before Griffin added her second basket off a steal. Griffin was fouled on the play and made the awarded free throw. Shuford and Griffin made back-to-back three-pointers to put Bradford up 13-0.

Newberry, which missed its first six field-goal attempts, finally scored when Brandy Whitfield made two free throws



Head Coach Sampson (second from left) holds the District 3-3A championship trophy while celebrating with players such as (l-r) Johnnylah Hankerson, Kah'myra Hankerson and Nyasia Lopey.



The Tornados celebrate their District 3-3A championship win. Visible players and coaches are (l-r) Johnnylah Hankerson, Kah'myra Hankerson, Ar'Nayshia Griffin, Jayda Sambolah, Nyasia Lopey, Assistant Coach Jessica Carter, Wynter Barrington, Riley Shuford and Ky'lee Johnson.

at the 3:35 mark of the first quarter.

Griffin got a basket off an offensive rebound and later made two free throws to give the Tornados a 15-point lead. Lopey then scored off a steal to make it a 19-2 game.

"The start we got off to was unreal," Jackson said. "We got off to a start I haven't seen all year, but the game is runs. At some point, (the Panthers) were going to make a run. They have, arguably, one of the best players in the area."

That player Jackson referred to was Whitfield, who would finish the game with 38 points. It was Whitfield who gave Newberry its first field goal when she made a three-point basket with 1:11 remaining in the first quarter. She added another three-pointer off a Londyn Hines steal to send the

Panthers into the second quarter trailing 19-8.

Whitfield's second three-point basket was in the midst of four consecutive turnovers by Bradford to end the first quarter. The Tornados then turned the ball over on their first three possessions of the second quarter. Newberry, though, was only able to turn those turnovers into five points.

Newberry got two three-pointers from Hines and one from Whitfield in narrowing the Tornados' lead to two points. Griffin scored off a turnover and was fouled on the play, making the awarded free throw to put Bradford up 26-21, but the Panthers then got two free throws from Whitfield and a three-pointer from Rhianna Chiever to even the score with one minute remaining in the first half.

A Whitfield layup gave Newberry its first lead with 38 seconds left in the second quarter.

Cayson Hampton made three free throws for Bradford, while Newberry got a basket from Destiny Neal, making the halftime score 30-29 in favor of the Panthers.

The Panthers scored the first six points of the third quarter, with a Whitfield three-pointer putting them ahead 36-29. Bradford's Ky'lee Johnson had a basket to end the Newberry run. Then, after a free throw by the Panthers' Neal, Griffin sank a three-pointer to leave the Tornados trailing 37-34. Whitfield, though, answered with her own three-point basket. Bradford got a basket each from Hampton and Lopey in trimming Newberry's lead from eight to four. A Shuford three-pointer later made it a two-point game at 45-43.

Whitfield, who made seven three-pointers in all, sank two shots from beyond the arc in the latter stages of the third quarter to help send the Panthers into the final quarter leading 51-46.

Two consecutive steals by Whitfield led to her own score as well as a three-pointer by Jada Brown, giving Newberry a 56-46 lead early in the fourth quarter. Whitfield's basket would be her last of the game. She was held scoreless the rest of the way until making a pair of free throws with 58 seconds to play.

It was an eight-point game when the Tornados went on an 11-0 run. Griffin and Lopey each scored off an offensive rebound. Griffin added another basket when she drove into the lane and spun around defender Chiever. She drew a foul on the play and made the awarded free throw to make it a 60-59 game in favor of Newberry with 1:50 to play.

After Newberry's Neal missed two free-throw attempts, Griffin got her fifth field goal of the quarter to give the Tornados a



Ar'Nayshia Griffin (center) handles the ball while being guarded by Newberry's Rhianna Chiever.

61-60 lead.

Newberry then turned the ball over, which resulted in Shuford scoring on a drive to the basket to put Bradford up by three.

Whitfield was fouled on a three-point attempt, making 2 of 3 attempts to leave the Panthers trailing by one point.

The Tornados were able to run out most of the remaining 54 seconds with Griffin handling the ball before Newberry finally committed a foul. Griffin made 1 of 2 free-throw attempts with nine seconds remaining for the final point of the game.

It was quite a battle that left his players exhausted, Jackson said, but he added, "They kept fighting."

"I'm super proud of the girls," Jackson said. "They deserve it."

Lopey and Shuford finished with nine and eight points, respectively, while Hampton had seven. Johnson and Wynter Barrington each added two points.

Griffin led the team in



Nyasia Lopey (far left) puts up a shot in the second half.

rebounds with 10 and steals with six.

Lopey and Barrington had nine and eight rebounds, respectively.

# Tornados reach district title game with win over Palatka

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School outscored visiting Palatka 21-10 in the second half as the Tornados defeated the Panthers 35-25 in the semifinals of the District 3-3A girls basketball tournament on Feb. 4.

The second seed Tornados (15-9) will play for the championship against top seed Newberry (19-3) on Friday, Feb. 6, at 7 p.m. in Newberry.

Points were hard to come by for both Bradford and third seed Palatka (10-11), especially in the first quarter, with the Tornados going 2 of 16 from the field and the Panthers going 1 of 10.

It was tied at 5-5 entering the second quarter, but the Panthers got three-pointers from Jhane Fountain and Destiny Williams to take an 11-7 lead.

Bradford, which got its first points of the quarter on two Ar'Nayshia Griffin free throws, missed its first five field-goal attempts before Riley Shuford scored on a drive to the basket to make it a two-point game. Shuford later grabbed an offensive rebound that led to a three-point basket by Griffin, putting the Tornados ahead 12-11.

It was 14-13 in favor of the Tornados after a Griffin basket, but Palatka went into halftime leading 15-14 when Charnelle Cue scored off a Fountain steal.

The Tornados' struggles seemed to be behind them to start the second half, with Bradford scoring the first eight points of the third quarter. Griffin rebounded a missed Palatka shot, dribbled the length of the floor and scored, giving the Tornados the lead for

good at 16-15. Griffin scored off a steal to make it 18-15 and later knocked down a jump shot to put Bradford up by five. Kah'myra Hankerson scored off a rebound putback to put Bradford up 22-15.

Palatka was able to cut its deficit to four going into the fourth, but the Tornados outscored the Panthers 9-2 to start the quarter. Griffin and Palatka's Fountain traded baskets before Griffin sank a three-pointer. Wynter Barrington and Cayson Hampton each had a basket for Bradford as the Tornados took a 33-22 lead.

The Panthers went 2 of 11 from the field in the final quarter.

Griffin finished with 19 points, while Hampton, Hankerson and Ky'lee Johnson each had four points. Barrington and Shuford each added two points.

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# Dear Union County Residents,

As superintendent of schools, I want to share a clear picture of the Union County School District's current financial situation. It's important to be upfront about where we are, how we got here, and why some difficult changes will be needed. While districts across Florida are facing similar challenges, our community deserves to understand what this means for Union County and the decisions ahead.

The residents of Union County have long supported our public schools, and out of respect for that support, I am sharing this information with you all. While this letter is detailed, I feel that it is necessary to fully explain the path that has led us to our current situation.

Over the past several years, legislative changes in Florida have had a profound impact on public education funding. While many of these policies were well-intended, their cumulative effect on traditional public schools has been devastating. I support school choice and respect the right of parents to determine the best educational setting for their children. However, I do not believe public tax dollars should be diverted to non-public educational options at the expense of traditional public schools. To state it plainly, these funding shifts have affected the stability and sustainability of the public school system our community relies on.

Public schools must meet strict academic, financial, and operational standards. Many non-public options that receive taxpayer funding are not held to the same level of accountability. Families should absolutely have the freedom to choose private schools, homeschooling, or other options. However, it is fair to ask why public dollars should fund those choices while public schools lose the resources needed to serve most students.



## What is FTE?

The Florida Department of Education uses an attendance system called Full-Time Equivalent, or FTE, to track student membership in the public school system. Four times a year, an FTE Survey is conducted as a form of census. The total number of FTE, which represents a student's enrollment and attendance in the public school system, is tied to state-issued funds. These FTE funds are released to the schools based on the number of students accounted for during the FTE Survey windows. The number of students enrolled and accounted for, as well as their individual needs, determines the amount of funds the schools receive. These funds are then used to employ teachers, counselors, transportation, special services, safety, mental health systems, and day-to-day operations for all students.



In recent years, the State of Florida has significantly expanded scholarship and voucher programs that use public funds to support non-traditional educational settings. As a result, more families are utilizing these options, which directly reduces funding to traditional public schools.

When a student leaves the public school system, the funding tied to that student follows them. While the student may no longer be enrolled, many of the costs required to operate a school do not disappear. Schools must still maintain buildings, run buses, staff classrooms, and provide required services for the students who remain. As enrollment declines, the system loses not only funding but also the stability needed to sustain these shared resources.



The table below shows the distribution of funds for students with exceptionalities. Note, in Union County, there are currently 69 students who receive FED-UA funds, 159 students who receive FTC/FES-EO funds, and 123 students who receive PEP funds. These monies, traditionally allocated for use in the public school setting, have been transferred out, thereby removing more than half a million dollars from the available funds for services explained above.

Family Empowerment Scholarship- Unique Abilities (FED-UA)		
Grades K-3	\$10,307	
Grades 4-8	\$9,727	
Grades 9-12	\$9,576	
Students with higher levels of disabilities:	\$22,926 to \$36,607	
Private School Scholarships (FTC and FES-EO) and Personalized Education Program (PEP)		
Grades K-3	\$8,988	Total number of students receiving funds in Union County: <b>FTC/FES-EO: 159</b> <b>PEP: 123</b>
Grades 4-8	\$8,386	
Grades 9-12	\$8,320	

As noted with the information above, the funds associated with enrolment are essential for continued provisions. Plainly stated, fewer students mean less funding; however, schools must still operate by providing required services, making financial stability even harder to maintain.



## Lower Tax Base, Lower Funding

Florida school districts are funded primarily through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Union County is especially dependent on this funding, with nearly 85% of our total revenue coming from the FEFP. Larger districts often have stronger local tax bases to offset losses; Union County does not. Our property tax base is among the lowest in the state, which limits our ability to generate local revenue. Each year, multiple funding calculations are conducted by the state based on actual and projected student enrollment. When enrollment declines, funds are withheld; even after budgets have been adopted, staff hired, and contracts executed.



Two years ago, after the third FEFP calculation, the Union County School District lost 70 FTE students, resulting in \$620,000 being withheld mid-year. This forced immediate cuts and a nearly \$1 million reduction in the following year's budget. Last year, a loss of 73 FTE students resulted in another \$670,000 reduction and placed the district into financial recovery. As a result, the 2025-2026 budget was reduced by nearly \$2.8 million compared to the previous year.



Actions taken to reach these savings included:

- Eliminated 38 positions
- Automatic Salary Step Increases Frozen for non-instructional employees
- Contract Completion Supplement Eliminated for non-instructional employees
- Reduced contract days and salary for the following classifications of employees:
  - 12-Month Non-Instructional Employees, reduction of 10 days
  - 10-Month Non-Instructional Employees, reduction of 10 days
  - Food Service Employees, reduction of 4 days
  - School Administrators, reduction of 10 days
  - District Directors, reduction of 10 days

Superintendent of Schools, reduction of 24 days

- District-paid benefits were reduced, with employees offered the option to pay for certain benefits through payroll deduction
- Reduction of Summer Hours
- Closure of Tigers Den Daycare
- Supplemental Salary Schedule Reductions

Most recently, the third calculation for this year showed a loss of 103 FTE students, resulting in \$1.4 million being withheld for the remainder of the year, an amount the district simply cannot absorb.

Below is Union County's FTE history and state-projected enrollment. Each loss of one FTE represents approximately \$9,200 in funding:

Union County's Historical and Projected FTE	
2022-2023: 2,197.80	Actual
2023-2024: 2,180.79	Actual
2024-2025: 2,121.49	Actual
2025-2026: Begin at 2,100.16; Currently 1,940	Current
2026-2027: 1,845.39	Projected
2027-2028: 1,755.28	Projected
2028-2029: 1,699.30	Projected
2029-2030: 1,641.88	Projected
2030-2031: 1,584.01	Projected

When projected enrollment losses are combined with rising costs for goods and services, the district anticipates losing an additional \$1 million next year. Continued reductions at this scale are not sustainable.



We are in ongoing communication with the Florida Department of Education and our local legislative delegation, including Senator Jennifer Bradley and Representative Chuck Brannan, to seek relief and advocate for changes to current funding policies. This is not a spending problem; it is a revenue problem driven by declining enrollment and reduced state funding.

As such, the district will be forced to reduce expenditures further. All programs, positions, services, and operational practices will be reviewed. We must restructure how we operate and accept that we can no longer function as we have in the past. The Union County School District will continue to strive to maintain the same level of excellence in academics, engagement, extracurricular activities, and community involvement that it always has, and will continue to strive to be the bridge between the families and the future of Union County.



In the coming months, I will continue to pursue every available option to stabilize our district. I ask for your support and engagement as we advocate for the future of public education in Union County. This challenge was not of our choosing, but it is one we must face together. While the road ahead will not be easy, we will persevere by working collectively and making difficult but necessary decisions.

Thank you for your time, understanding, and continued support of our schools.

*Respectfully,*  
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